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MLLE DE LA VALLIÈRE.

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LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH,

AND

THE COURT OF FRANCE

IN

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

BY MISS PARDOE,

AUTHOR OF "THE CITY OF THE SULTAN," ETC.

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THE SECOND VOLUME.

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LOUIS XIV,

AND THE

COURT OF FRANCE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.

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On the following morning Mademoiselle was awakened at the early hour of seven, and advised to show herself as soon as possible in public, in order to rally around her all

such of the citizens as yet remained undecided whether to adopt her interests, or those of the royal councillors, who were still awaiting entrance into the city. The princess, who instantly perceived the value of this advice, lost no time in making her toilette; and, while this was proceeding, sent to summon the governor and the mayor to accompany her in her progress. The chains which had been stretched across the streets, as was at that period usual in all cities threatened with siege, were still in their places; and when it was suggested that they should be removed, MADEMOISELLE objected, observing that she would make the tour of the streets on foot.

She did so accordingly; commencing her pilgrimage by attending mass at the church of St. Catherine, near the bridge, after which she ascended one of the towers commanding the faubourg, whence she saw M. de Champlatreux walking in front of the Augustine convent, in company with a number of the court lords; and as she was anxious that the royal party should be made aware that she was in possession of the city, she rallied all her officers about her, whose blue scarfs were necessarily sufficiently conspicuous at once to arrest the attention of the Mazarinites, and to reveal to them the hopelessness of their errand; even without the shouts of the populace who were collected upon the bridge, and who rent the air with cries of "Long live the king and the princess!" and "Down with Mazarin!"

These shouts were echoed by the inhabitants of the faubourg; the guard upon the bridge fired a volley; and then the exclamations became so vehement and so persevering, that the princess, delighted with the effect produced by her presence, and, at last, perfectly in her

element, ordered the guards to be doubled, in order to prove to the council that they had nothing to hope; and, in consequence, the king left Cléry the same day, and passed the night at Sully.

From the church, MADEMOISELLE, after traversing the principal streets, proceeded to the palace of the bishop, with whom she dined; and thence to the town-hall, where she was considerably less at her ease than when surrounded by the troops and the mob. When she found herself seated in a great chair, in the midst of the most profound silence, she confesses that she was extremely embarrassed, never having spoken in public, and being, moreover, very ignorant; but the exigency of her position gave her courage, and she made a long speech, in which she dilated upon the great interest taken by her royal father in his good city of Orleans; which he had felt that he could not better testify than by sending as his representative the person who was most dear to him, when prevented by important business in Paris from hastening himself to protect it from the evil designs of the cardinal; and that she had, consequently, accepted the mission in the same spirit; and had come, either to assist the citizens to defend themselves, or, should this unfortunately become impossible, to perish with them.

At the conclusion of her harangue, the princess received the thanks of the meeting; and on leaving the town-hall she saw the windows of the prison crowded with soldiers, who entreated her to grant their release. She inquired of the authorities the nature of their crime, and was informed that there were several accusations against them; upon which she offered to hang them all in the public squares of the city; but the magistrates refused to profit by her proposal, and left them entirely to her mercy.

MADEMOISELLE had calculated upon this concession, and instantly releasing the whole number, desired that their horses and arms should be restored to them, and that they should forthwith join the army, to which, by this circumstance, she added a body of between forty and fifty horsemen.

It was late in the evening before she returned to the palace; and shortly afterwards, a letter was delivered to her from the Duke de Beaufort, in which he announced that he had been unable to meet Her Royal Highness according to his promise, having been anxious to capture the king, who had ascended the opposite bank of the river; in which view he had attempted to pass the Loire by the bridge of Gergau. He had, however, signally failed in his object, Marshal Turenne having checked his advance by a magnificent defence; and without having accomplished one object of usefulness or advantage, he had sacrificed a great number of brave men; and among the rest, Sirot, Baron de Vitaux, who was one of the lieutenant-generals of The Prince at Rocroy; a man of birth, merit, and great military reputation, who was mortally wounded in the lower jaw, and whom MADEMOISELLE caused to be transported to Orleans, in order that no exertion might be spared to save him. All her care was, however, unfortunately of no avail, as he only survived his hurt a few days.

The Baron de Vitaux was a serious loss to the party of the princes, being a soldier of great experience, who had been reared in the army of the Emperor of Germany; where he had, by a singular fatality, exchanged pistol-shots with three kings—those of Bohemia, Poland, and Sweden—and had even perforated the hat of the latter. He had served the king faithfully for

years, and was covered with wounds; but his claims having been overlooked, he abandoned the court, and retired to his estates in Burgundy, whence *Monsieur* had induced him to emerge in order to join the Fronde. The annoyance of MADEMOISELLE was consequently great when she learnt the ill-advised Quixotism of M. de Beaufort, with its fatal results; and she wrote to both himself and the Duke de Nemours to desire them to attend her at an hotel in the faubourg, in order that no future step might be taken without the general concurrence of herself and her council. They met accordingly; but as the two noble brothers-in-law were always at variance, they profited by this opportunity, greatly to the terror of the princess, to quarrel as to the direction in which the army was to march, and disregarding the presence of MADEMOISELLE, proceeded from words to blows; M. de Beaufort striking the Duke de Nemours on the face, and the duke replying by pulling off the wig of his opponent. Each then drew his sword, but the princess caused them to be instantly separated; exacting, as some reparation for the disrespect which they had exhibited towards herself, that they should instantly become reconciled. It was, however, much more easy to will such a reconciliation than to compel it; and it was not without extreme difficulty and long expostulation, that MADEMOISELLE succeeded in inducing the two princes to embrace in her presence; when she says that M. de Beaufort advanced towards his brother-in-law, with open arms, and his eyes filled with tears; while that brother received and returned his embrace as he would have done that of a footman.

Nothing was, consequently, decided at this interview; which had, nevertheless, absorbed so much time, that the inhabitants of Orleans were becoming uneasy

at the long absence of the princess; and she considered it expedient to explain to the principal authorities the cause of the delay; after which she retired to her apartments, and wrote to the two belligerents, beseeching them to live more amicably for the future, not only for their own sakes, but also for that of their common cause; and to order the army to march immediately upon Montargis.[1]

On the following Saturday the princess received the reply of *Monsieur* to a letter which she had written to him, announcing her entrance into Orleans; and she declares that her delight was great at the tenderness which it exhibited; although our readers will probably attribute a very different feeling to the writer. Thus it ran:—

"My Daughter,

"You may believe the joy which I felt at the action you have just accomplished: you have saved Orleans for me, and insured Paris. It is a general subject of congratulation; and every one says that your exploit is worthy of the grand-daughter of Henry the Great. I never doubted your daring, but on this occasion I have learnt that you have even more prudence than courage. I must tell you, moreover, that I am delighted at what you have

[1] Montargis, situate 17 leagues from Orleans, is the capital of the department of the Loiret, and commands both the Loire and the Yonne. The town stretches along the base of a lofty eminence, near a fine forest which bears its name. In its immediate neighbourhood still exist the ruins of a castle, where, on one of the chimney-pieces of the great hall, is sculptured the history of the celebrated Aubry de Mont-Didier, whose dog is asserted to have attacked and overcome the assassin of his master, in the presence of Charles VIII. The town was founded in the reign of Clovis; and in the 12th century belonged to the Courtenay family.

done, as much for your own sake as for mine. Henceforward write to me through your secretary, for the reason you wot of. "GASTON."

This reason, as MADEMOISELLE herself asserts, was the extreme difficulty experienced by every one in decyphering her writing, which was unusually illegible.

At the commencement of the following month (April), the princess received the welcome intelligence that M. de Condé had assumed the command of the army; news which was on the morrow confirmed by a letter to herself, in which he complimented her upon the heroism of her conduct; and assured her of his irrevocable attachment to the interests of *Monsieur*, and his devotion to her own person. He brought, however, no reinforcement to the troops, being accompanied by only seven individuals; and having left Agen almost in a state of revolt against him in the rear, and his whole family divided into parties. He had made the whole journey from Bordeaux to Orleans in the short space of seven days; and had narrowly escaped being taken at Cosne by a captain of the royal army, who only missed him by a quarter of an hour. He was also in great danger of discovery at an inn by the roadside; where, being disguised as a groom, he was ordered to saddle and bridle a horse, a task which he could not accomplish.

Despite all these drawbacks, however, the sole presence of M. de Condé was an incalculable advantage to the army, who relied upon his reputation as confidently as they would have done upon an augmentation of their force. When he reached the advanced guard he had been stopped by the sentinel, to whom his person was unknown; and, irritated by the circumstance, he refused

to declare his identity; when, fortunately, a German colonel who commanded the guard, impressed with the conviction that it was The Prince, alighted from his horse, and approaching that of M. de Condé, suddenly embraced his knees, pronouncing his name at the same time. In an instant it was echoed on every side; and a wild spirit of enthusiasm pervaded all ranks.

Only seven days subsequently, the princess received a second letter from the great general, couched in these terms:—

"MADEMOISELLE,

"I receive so many new proofs of your goodness, that words fail me to thank you; I will merely assure you that there is nothing which I would not undertake for your service; do me the honour to be convinced of this, and to rely upon it. I yesterday obtained information that the Mazarin army had crossed the river, and had separated to different stations. I resolved instantly to attack them in these places; and this measure succeeded so well, that I fell upon their first quarters before they had any warning. I first overcame three regiments of dragoons; and then I marched to the head-quarters of Hocquincourt, which I also carried. There was some little resistance, but finally all were routed. We followed them for three hours, after which we moved towards M. de Turenne; but we found him posted so advantageously, and our own troops were so weary with the long march, and so loaded with the booty which they had made, that we did not consider it right to attack him at a disadvantage; all therefore passed in a cannonade; and, finally, he retreated. All the troops of Hocquincourt were routed; all the baggage

taken; and the booty amounted to between two and three thousand horses, a number of prisoners, and their store of ammunition. M. de Nemours did wonders; and was wounded in the hip by a pistol bullet, but not dangerously. M. de Beaufort had his horse killed, and behaved very well; M. de la Rochefoucauld very well; Clinchamp, Tavannes, and Valon, the same; as did all the other adjutant-generals. Maré was struck by a cannon ball; but besides these we have not lost thirty men. I think that you will be glad to hear this news; and will not doubt that I am, MADEMOISELLE, your very humble and very obedient servant,

"LOUIS DE BOURBON."

This intelligence was, indeed, most welcome to the princess, although she was deeply grieved on ascertaining that so many of her personal friends had suffered in the conflict. The Count de Maré did not survive his wound; and although the result of the engagement strengthened the faction at Paris, great uneasiness existed as to the ultimate fate of M. de Nemours, whose hurt did not, however, prove mortal.

In the royal army all was consternation. The court was at Gien,[1] suffering every species of deprivation. The defeat of the Marshal d'Hocquincourt had occasioned great alarm; and the queen no sooner ascertained that the two armies had met, than she issued an order that all the equipages and baggage should be transported to the

[1] Gien is situated on the right bank of the Loire, at 15½ leagues from Orleans. It possesses a fine castle, built, it is believed, by Charlemagne; and which has been inhabited by several of the French kings, among others, by Charles VII, Francis I, and Louis XIV.

opposite bank of the river, in order that an immediate flight might be rendered easy, and the bridge destroyed after the passage of the king's suite. At dawn on the following morning, all the carriages, filled with the ladies of the court, were accordingly collected on the other side the Loire; but the operation was so ill-conducted, that had M. de Condé pursued his advantage, he might have forced M. de Turenne, whose command was very inconsiderable, and captured the whole party; who ultimately arrived in such a state of bewilderment at St. Fargeau, that they neither knew what they were doing, nor what they ought to do.[1]

M. de Senneterre asserts that this was the only occasion upon which he had seen the queen thoroughly hopeless and depressed, for she scarcely could decide in what direction to turn her steps; and told him that she felt convinced, had M. de Turenne shown less firmness and ability, and suffered himself to be defeated like the Marshal d'Hocquincourt, every city in the province would have followed the example of Orleans, and closed its gates against the king.[2]

As the royal fugitives pursued their retreat to Montereau they were exposed, not only to privation, but to absolute robbery from each other; nor was the young sovereign himself exempted from this pillage, but lost several of his best horses. From Montereau they next proceeded to Corbeil;[3] where an adventure occurred which is too laughable to be omitted, and which we will give in

[1] Laporte.

[2] Mémoires du Cardinal de Retz.

[3] Corbeil stands upon the right bank of the Seine, 12½ leagues from Versailles, and 3 from Melun.

the words of Laporte, who was an eye-witness to the quarrel.

"The king," he says, "insisted that *Monsieur*[1] should sleep in his room, which was so small that only one person could pass. In the morning, as they lay awake, the king inadvertently spat upon the bed of *Monsieur*, who immediately spat upon the king's bed; thereupon Louis, getting angry, spat in his brother's face; and when they could spit no longer, they proceeded to drag each other's sheets on to the floor: after which they prepared to fight. During this quarrel I did what I could to restrain the king; but as I could not succeed, I sent for M. de Villeroi, who re-established peace. *Monsieur* lost his temper sooner than the king; but the king was much more difficult to appease than *Monsieur*."

The court diverged from its proper road, leaving Paris on the left; and pursued its way to St. Germain, where it was ascertained that the Parisians had destroyed the bridges, a circumstance which shed gloom over every countenance; as, after all their sufferings, the courtiers had looked forward to a compensation from the stores of the capital. No one possessed any ready money save the cardinal, who was suspected of having made a good provision in case of need, although he declared that he was as poor as the meanest soldier in the ranks.

Laporte gives several anecdotes of the young king at this period, which are eminently characteristic of the after man.

The news of the battle at Étampes[2] reached the court

[1] The Duke d'Anjou.

[2] Etampes is distant 13¾ leagues from Versailles, in the department of Seine and Oise. It is a very ancient town, and is men-

during the night, accompanied by the intelligence that the princess had been worsted; and M. de Villeroi, to whom it was first communicated, hastened to inform the king and the Duke d'Anjou of the propitious event. They, as well as Laporte, instantly sprang from their beds, and rushed in their slippers, nightcaps, and dressing-gowns to the chamber of the cardinal, whom they awakened with the joyful tidings; and who hurried in his turn, and in the same unsophisticated costume, to announce them to the queen. This anecdote explains better than any laboured description the uneasiness of the court at that period, and the natural energy of Louis.

About the same time another circumstance occurred, which, trivial as it was, serves to prove the perfect helplessness of the king, although he had attained his majority, and was supposed to be the sovereign of a powerful nation. Birragues, the first valet of the king's wardrobe, had a cousin who was an ensign in the regiment of Picardy, and who having been wounded at Étampes, petitioned for his promotion to the rank of lieutenant, his superior officer having been killed in the same engagement; and requested M. de Créquy, the first gentleman of the chamber on duty, to use his interest

tioned during the first race of Frankish kings, under the name of *Stampæ*. Sacked by Rollo in 911, it was rebuilt by King Robert, who founded there several religious houses. It shared in the events of the 14th and 15th centuries, which plunged all France into consternation; and was ravaged by the Orleans faction. Francis I. raised the county of Étampes into a duchy, in favour of John de Brosses. Étampes was several times taken and retaken during the religious wars; and became, in 1589, the rendezvous of the forces of the League. Henry IV. took possession of it in 1590, and razed the fortifications of the castle built by King Robert, of which the ruins still remain.

with the young monarch in behalf of his kinsman. Louis considered the request to be a just one, and readily promised to speak to the queen and the cardinal in his behalf; but as, after a lapse of several days, the king had not adverted to the circumstance, M. de Créquy, during his toilette, ventured to ask him if he had been good enough to remember the solicitations of M. de Birragues. Louis made no reply, and endeavoured to appear as though he had not heard the question; upon which Laporte, who was arranging his dress, remarked that those who had the honour to serve His Majesty were very unfortunate, since they could not hope even to obtain justice. As he ceased speaking Louis whispered in his ear:

"It is not my fault, my dear Laporte, I spoke to *him* about it, but it was of no use."

As the young king never mentioned the cardinal in any other manner, from the hatred which he bore towards him, the friends of the applicant were thus informed whence the obstacle arose.

On a subsequent occasion Laporte was summoned during his breakfast; and on entering the chamber of Louis, the king drew out a handful of gold, saying that the superintendent of finance had sent him a hundred louis as pocket-money, to enable him to be liberal to the soldiers; and that he wished him to take care of them for him. Laporte respectfully remonstrated, suggesting that they were better in the keeping of His Majesty. Louis, however, persisted, saying that with his high boots the money would be troublesome. This objection was happily overruled, by the attendant recommending that instead of carrying it in

his haut-de-chausses, the king should deposit it in the pocket of his vest; and Louis, delighted with any arrangement which enabled him to enjoy the novelty of bearing a sum of money upon his person, at once adopted the expedient. He was not, however, destined to be long burthened with the unaccustomed freight; and the manner in which he became dispossessed of it, is quite as characteristic as his embarrassment on its receipt.

During the sojourn of the court at St. Germain, Moreau, the first valet of the wardrobe, had advanced eleven pistoles for the royal gloves; and as, like all those about him, he was distressed for funds, the want of this hundred and ten livres had inconvenienced him considerably; and he accordingly no sooner ascertained that the young king had come into possession of a hundred louis than he entreated Laporte to obtain for him the sum that he had advanced.

As he was assisting the young sovereign in his arrangements for the night, Laporte accordingly reminded him of the debt, and informed him that he had promised to mention it to His Majesty; but the worthy functionary was too late in his application. Mazarin had ascertained that Louis was in possession of the money; and by some means or other had obtained it from him.[1]

Meanwhile, MADEMOISELLE began to weary of her inactive life at Orleans, whence the tide of war had rolled away; and decided upon returning to Paris. She consequently despatched a trumpeter to M. de Turenne, and to the Marshal d'Hocquincourt, who were encamped

[1] Laporte.

at Châtres, on the high road between Paris and Étampes, to request passports, as she was anxious to visit the capital without delay; and after leaving Orleans, she found at Angerville the escort which had been sent to meet her; when, the weather being remarkably fine, she mounted on horseback, accompanied by the Countesses of Fiesque and Frontenac, who still remained with her, and to whom, on that account, *Monsieur* had written shortly after their entrance into Orleans, complimenting them upon their courage, and addressing the letter to *the Countesses, Adjutant-Generals in the Army of my Daughter against Mazarin.*

De Retz states that *Monsieur* felt so little confidence in the prudence of the princess, that when she offered to act as his representative at Orleans, he consented with great reluctance; and on the very day when she took leave of him, and commenced her journey, he remarked that this exhibition of chivalry would have been very absurd if it had not been sustained by the good sense of the two ladies who were her companions. It is, however, extremely probable that the quixotism of the adventure, so long as it ensured his own safety, would have been equally welcome to the Duke d'Orleans, even had MADEMOISELLE undertaken it without any extraneous support.

Be this as it may, it is certain that from the arrival of the duke's letter, so superscribed, all the commanding officers of the army of the Fronde paid the two countesses the honours due to the rank which *Monsieur* in a moment of unusual hilarity had assigned to them; and in accordance with this arrangement, as they passed along the line of one of the German regiments which was marching in front of MADEMOISELLE, M. de Chavagnac, who commanded her

escort, halted corps, and desired the Count de Quinski, its colonel, to pay them the honours due to their military rank, which he did without hesitation; entering into the jest, says MADEMOISELLE, as though he had been a Frenchman; first causing the troops to draw their swords and salute them according to the German fashion, and then detaching a whole squadron in order to render the honour more complete; a homage the more flattering as the gallant count was the nephew of Wallenstein.

The princess remained a day at Étampes, awaiting her passports, for which M. de Turenne had despatched a messenger to St. Germain, where the court were then residing; and she employed it by holding a levee, where all the officers appeared in full costume. In the evening she received not only the required passports, but also an intimation that the two royalist marshals would meet her on the morrow outside their quarters with their army in battle array. Clinchamp, however, whose veteran experience led him to doubt this fact, asserted that they would do nothing of the kind; but, knowing that she had not seen their own troops collected, and believing that they would leave their position on the same occasion, they were anxious to avail themselves of the opportunity to offer battle. The event proved the correctness of his judgment, for it was shortly afterwards ascertained that the king's forces were marching towards them. In consequence, MADEMOISELLE ordered the whole of the troops to enter the town, a movement which was hastily accomplished; and she then got into her carriage, and pursued her way towards Paris.

At Châtres she found the Baron d'Aprémont, who expressed to her the great regret felt by the two marshals,

that they could not await her arrival as they had proposed to do, having been compelled to march upon Étampes. He then gave her a cornet and twenty men as her escort, and himself accompanied her for a quarter of a league on her journey. At Bourg-la-Reine, the princess was met by M. de Condé, the Duke de Beaufort, the Prince de Tarente, M. de Rohan, and all the men of rank then sojourning at Paris. As her carriage approached, The Prince alighted, saluted her, and took his seat in her coach; she next encountered the Duchesses of Epernon and Sully, who also joined her party; and they beguiled the remainder of the journey by listening to a detail of all her proceedings at Orleans. As MADEMOISELLE drew near the capital she found half the population outside the gates to welcome her; and the road, to the extent of a league, bordered with carriages of every description; nor was she by any means insensible to this popular demonstration, amid which she forgot the intelligence of M. de Condé, that *Monsieur* was seriously displeased by her departure from Orleans without his permission.

She alighted at the Orleans palace, where a great crowd had assembled; and whatever might be the real feeling of His Royal Highness, whom she found in his bed, he received her with tolerable graciousness; for which she was, without doubt, indebted to M. de Condé, who requested permission to be present at the interview, lest the Duke d'Orleans should reproach her with her unauthorized return to Paris. Having given him an account of the leading circumstances of her journey, and informed him of the projected attack on Étampes, she next proceeded to pay her respects to *Madame*, who greeted her with considerable coldness; and as the princess was

still accompanied by M. de Condé, whom the duchess had never liked, she expended the annoyance which she felt at the advantage obtained over her by MADEMOISELLE. on this occasion, when the popularity of the one contrasted so painfully with the enforced insignificance of the other, by exclaiming that the boots of The Prince smelt so strongly of leather that she could not support it; and M. de Condé was consequently obliged to leave the room.

After a very brief visit, the princess retired in her turn, and hastened to receive the congratulations of the courtiers who were assembled in the cabinet. Here she again found The Prince, surrounded by all the pretty women of the court; and after an exchange of compliments, she proceeded to the *Cours*[1] in the coach of Madame de Nemours, accompanied also by the Duchesses d'Epernon, Sully, and Châtillon, and the two attendant countesses; The Prince, the Duke de Beaufort, and other nobles following in a second carriage.

On the morrow, a courier reached the princess with the news of the defeat of the forces of the Fronde at Étampes; which, as we have already stated, the court had ascertained during the night. Many prisoners had been taken, but few officers of rank had fallen. The event was, however, most unfortunate for the faction; and MADEMOISELLE felt it the more keenly as it contrasted very disadvantageously with the ovation of which she was even then the object. All Paris, as she declares, visited her during the day; and her apartments were so crowded that there was great

[1] The fashionable promenade and drive of the court, which extended in a straight line from the gardens of the Tuileries to the extremity of the Champs Elysées.

difficulty in moving. The King of England was among her guests, although he by no means sympathized in her interests, having sent the Duke of York to serve as a volunteer under Marshal Turenne; and he was, consequently, careful to avoid all allusion to the encounter at Étampes. The Queen of England, on the contrary, spoke freely of passing events; and when she learnt the forced entrance of the princess into Orleans, remarked, with somewhat bitter pleasantry, that she was not astonished to find that MADEMOISELLE had saved the city from the hands of her enemies, as Joan of Arc had done before her; or that, like her, she had commenced by repelling the English,—alluding to the objection which had been made by the princess to the visits of her son. As this caustic observation was necessarily repeated to MADEMOISELLE, it engendered a coolness that induced Queen Henrietta to offer an apology; which was, however, tendered rather upon the occasion of some impertinent remarks in which one of her personal friends had indulged on the subject of the Fronde, than supposed to be necessitated by her own words; and this done, the princess continued to pay her respects to her royal aunt as usual.

But while MADEMOISELLE thus found herself the idol of the capital, the court had proceeded to besiege Étampes, and this expedition may in truth be considered as the first serious campaign of Louis XIV. He acquitted himself well for so mere a youth, several bullets having passed closed beside him without his evincing the slightest fear; and as every one was congratulating him upon his courage, when he was retiring for the night, he turned towards his favourite valet de chambre, and inquired if he had been frightened? Laporte replied in the negative.

"You are a brave man then;" said the king.

"Sire;" was the clever rejoinder; "one is always brave when one is penniless." Louis laughed; the epigram was as intelligible to both himself and Mazarin, as to the utterer.[1]

The young sovereign could scarcely have commenced the career of arms under more painful circumstances. On every side he was surrounded by sick and wounded soldiers, who implored the help which he was unable to afford. Not possessing a louis d'or which he could call his own, he was compelled to look on with a bleeding heart perhaps, but certainly with a closed hand; nor did the aspect of the captured town afford any relief from the dreary picture presented by its captors. Wherever the court had passed, the peasants, believing that they must be safe under the protection of royalty, from the depredations of the army which was laying waste the neighbourhood, had driven in their cattle, which soon died for want of food, as the owners dared not trust them beyond the walls to graze; and their animals once dead, they began to die off in their turn; for, having neither bread nor wine, and finding no shelter save a few sheds, and the waggons and carts which encumbered the streets, they were attacked by malignant fever, and expired by hundreds. Thus the king was exposed to the most frightful spectacles; and on one occasion, as he was passing over the bridge of Melun, he came upon a group not readily to be forgotten. It was that of a woman and her three children huddled closely together; the mother and two of the children dead, and stiffening in the morning air, and an infant still living, and straining

[1] Laporte.

vainly at the exhausted breast which could no longer afford it sustenance. The queen, who was greatly affected by the misery which she was condemned to witness, had perpetually upon her lips the account which would be required from God against the authors of so far-spreading and terrible an evil; never appearing to remember that it principally originated with herself; but, by a delicate sophistry more congenial to her sensibility, transferring the crime and the responsibility to those who had thwarted her projects, and curbed her ambition.

The royal forces suffered more than those of the Fronde during this siege, from the fact of their not being enabled to surround the town, owing to the paucity of their numbers, but merely to open the trenches on the Orleans side. To attack Étampes in circumvallation would have required considerably more than the eight thousand men who were brought against it; and the king's army suffered severely from the vigorous sorties made by the enemy. Among those who fell was the Chevalier de la Vieuville, a brave man, and a court favourite.

The young sovereign was present during the whole of the operations; and the cardinal sent an order to the besieged not to fire in the direction of the royal equipage; an injunction which was disregarded as a matter of course, under the pretext that the officer to whom it had been communicated was a foreigner, and had not comprehended the command.

A few days after her return to Paris, MADEMOISELLE was informed that The Prince had proceeded to St. Cloud, in order to quarter some of his troops there, and to make himself master of that post as he had already done of Neuilly; but not satisfied with this step, he advanced

to St. Denis, which he took after a slight resistance, the garrison being weak, and the town ill defended. He possessed himself of this place at daylight, but it was retaken by the royal forces at dusk; despite the reinforcement furnished by the Duke de Beaufort, who narrowly escaped being made a prisoner on his retreat towards Paris. Five hundred citizens who went to his rescue, were cut to pieces in the faubourg St. Denis, and it was only the advent of the darkness that prevented still greater loss. A movement upon Paris was forthwith determined by the king's generals, their strength having been greatly augmented by a body of troops which the Marshal Laferté Senectère had brought up from Lorraine; and the intention was to attack the forces of the Fronde which were scattered along the bank of the Seine, between Suresne and St. Cloud. M. de Condé did not, however, consider the position tenable; and he accordingly raised his camp during the night, and retired upon Charenton.

From this period the war of the Fronde may really be said to have commenced in earnest. The army of The Prince, shut up in Paris, diminished day by day; and his power became weakened in an equal proportion. M. de Turenne, who was aware of this circumstance, detained the king and the court in the neighbourhood of the capital, which he attacked with his forces, insufficient as they were.

About half-past ten on the night of the 1st of July, MADEMOISELLE heard the drums beating, and the trumpets sounding; and as her apartments were only separated by the moat from the Tuileries, she had no sooner opened a window than she could hear the troops of The Prince filing off, and even distinguish the different

airs to which they marched. She remained listening to these ominous sounds until midnight, in deep thought, and with a vague presentiment that the following day would prove an eventful one to herself.

During this time several persons came to pay their respects to her, and among others M. de Flamarin, of whom she inquired if he could guess the subject of her reflections. On his replying in the negative, she said she felt a conviction that on the morrow she should be called upon to take as active a part in Paris as she had played at Orleans. The idea amused de Flamarin, who remarked that Her Royal Highness would display great ingenuity in discovering such an opportunity, because nothing remarkable was likely to occur, negotiations having taken place, which would only render it necessary for the armies to embrace when they met.

To this conclusion the princess, however, calmly and firmly objected to concede any trust; affirming that she was aware of the negotiations to which he alluded, and believed that they were all great dupes to suffer themselves to be amused by empty words, instead of rendering their forces more effective; as, during the period of their own inaction, it was well known that the cardinal had collected his own troops, and had so strengthened his position, that any encounter must prove most disastrous to the army of the Fronde. M. de Flamarin still, however, remaining incredulous, MADEMOISELLE followed up her prophecy by remarking, that it was not impossible that he who had been one of the negotiators, upon whose interference he placed such reliance, might ere another sunset boast a limb the less; but her interlocutor saw only new cause for

merriment in this second specimen of the princess's spirit of divination; and left her with a jest upon his lips, asserting that it had already been predicted that he would die with a rope about his neck.

At one o'clock MADEMOISELLE retired, but it was scarcely six when she heard some one knock at her door; and springing up, she called her women, who introduced into her chamber the Count de Fiesque. He had been despatched by M. de Condé to *Monsieur*, to inform him that His Highness had been attacked between Montmartre and La Chapelle; and that, as regarded himself, he had been refused entrance at the Porte St. Denis, which led him to fear that The Prince would meet with the same impediment should he be compelled to retreat. His errand accomplished, he had entreated *Monsieur* to mount his horse, and to satisfy himself by personal observation of the actual state of things; but there was positive danger abroad; and whenever decision was required Gaston was always indisposed; it was therefore not surprising that on this occasion especially the prince had refused to leave his bed, asserting that he was seriously ill; and finding that he could make no impression either upon the pride or the self-respect of *Monsieur*, the Count had now come to MADEMOISELLE, to implore her, in the name of M. de Condé, not to abandon his cause. The princess had no such intention; and, from a mingled motive which it would be scarcely fair to analyze when we remember how nobly it prompted her after-actions, she dismissed M. de Fiesque with a solemn promise that she would serve The Prince to the whole extent of her power; dressed herself in haste, and hurried to the Luxembourg, where she encountered *Monsieur* upon the steps.

Delighted by such an apparition, MADEMOISELLE did not seek to conceal her joy, but expressed how truly glad she was to find that the fears of M. de Fiesque had misled him as regarded the health of His Royal Highness. It was, however, no part of *Monsieur's* intention to resuscitate so inopportunely; and he consequently hastened to moderate the self-gratulation of the princess by declaring that the count was quite correct in his report, for that, although not ill enough to keep his bed, he was utterly unable to take any part in public business.

Urged by the emergency of the moment, and exasperated by the contemptible inaction of her father, MADEMOISELLE, despite this assertion, ventured to expostulate, bidding him remember that all Paris had their eyes upon him at such a conjuncture; and that he would do well to mount his horse, and to take the lead in proceedings in which his honour was so deeply involved. This burst of generous indignation was, however, without effect upon the dastardly spirit of Gaston, who could find no better reply than that the thing was impossible, that he was too weak, and that he did not believe he could walk a hundred yards. "Then, Sir;" said the princess, urged beyond her patience; "you will do well at once to go to bed out of sight, for the world had better believe that you cannot, than that you will not, leave it."

There can be no doubt that the advice was good, but the duke was too egotistical to profit by it; and he still continued calmly to move about the palace, in the midst of his household, who all appeared to be perfectly unaffected by the threatened danger from without; and to treat it with a contemptuous disregard, which at

length extorted from the princess the impatient remark, that she could in no other way account for so ill-timed and ill-omened an indifference, than by supposing that His Royal Highness had a treaty in his pocket for him and his, bearing the signature of Mazarin.

Monsieur made no comment upon this covert accusation, and MADEMOISELLE was beginning to despair of her mission, when Messieurs de Rohan and de Chavigny were announced; who, instantly detecting her discomfiture, used their influence which was considerable with the supine prince, to permit his daughter to represent him at the town-hall, as she had done at Orleans; to which he acceded with more feigned than actual reluctance; and ultimately gave M. de Rohan a letter, in which he empowered MADEMOISELLE to act as his substitute with the mayors and magistrates.

Once possessed of this document the princess hastened to quit the Luxembourg with the Countess de Fiesque, who was her constant companion; and in the Rue Dauphine she encountered M. de Jarzé, who was at that time in the interest of The Prince, by whom he had been despatched to request the Duke d'Orleans to give an order for the troops which had been left at Poissy to traverse the capital, as he was in great need of a reinforcement, being furiously attacked, and finding that the royalist force was three times greater than his own. The troops were already awaiting this order at the Porte St. Honoré; while the marquis had left the field during the hottest of the fight, and had received a ball in his arm, which having grazed the bone near the elbow, subjected him to extreme pain. Nevertheless, MADEMOISELLE desired him to attend her to the town-hall, telling him that

it was not to *Monsieur* that he must address himself, but to the governor of Paris, for whom she had a letter; and on receiving this assurance M. de Jarzé did not hesitate to obey.

The streets were full of tumultuous groups: nearly all the citizens were armed; and they had no sooner recognised the princess, whose exploit at Orleans was still fresh in their minds, than they shouted to her as she passed, telling her that they were ready to undertake whatever she might command.

MADEMOISELLE replied with dignified affability to their eager greeting, and informed them that for the moment she was simply about to request the opinion of the governor; but that she entreated them, should their services become necessary, not to withdraw from her the confidence which they now exhibited in her zeal and prudence; and she asked it earnestly, for she was quite aware, should the authorities refuse the demand which she was about to make, that she should possess a powerful resource in the good-will of the populace, so long as they remained faithful to her interests. When she reached the town-hall the Marshal de l'Hôpital, the governor of Paris, and the councillor Lefevre, provost of the merchants, advanced to the top of the steps to meet her, apologizing for any failure in etiquette, not having been apprised in time of her approach. MADEMOISELLE thanked them for their courtesy, and told them that *Monsieur*, being indisposed, had sent her to them as his representative; requesting them to follow her to the council-chamber, to which they assented without difficulty. There M. de Rohan presented to them the letter of His Royal Highness; and when it had been read

by the registrar, and they had ascertained that it invested the princess with unlimited powers, they asked what she wished from them.

"I desire three things;" replied MADEMOISELLE firmly; "the first is, that all the citizens shall be called upon to take up arms."

"That is already done;" replied the marshal.

"Secondly, that two thousand of these citizens shall be detached, and marched to join the forces of M. de Condé."

"That will be more difficult;" observed the marshal once more; "citizens cannot be detached like regular troops; but be under no uneasiness, we will send two thousand men to The Prince from the forces of His Royal Highness."

"Thirdly;" pursued MADEMOISELLE, who had judiciously reserved her most important demand to the last; "that the army shall be allowed free passage through the capital, from the gate of St. Honoré to that of St. Denis, or St. Antoine."

This requisition produced precisely the effect for which the princess had prepared herself. The marshal, the provost, and the other members of the council looked at each other in silence; but MADEMOISELLE, aware that during all this delay M. de Condé was engaged with a superior force, and that everything depended upon the measure she had urged, unhesitatingly returned to the charge.

"Gentlemen;" she said, in a calm and authoritative tone; "it appears to me that this is no subject for your deliberation. His Royal Highness has always been so firm a friend to the city of Paris, that it is merely just,

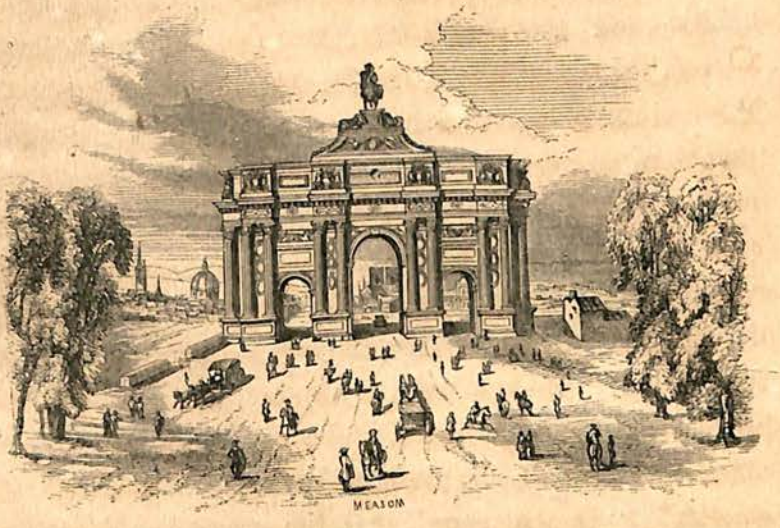
on an occasion when his preservation and that of M. de Condé depend upon your decision, that you should testify some gratitude for all his benefits. Moreover, you may be convinced, gentlemen, that the cardinal has returned to France with the most hostile intentions; and that should The Prince be defeated, there will be no quarter for those who have proscribed the minister, and set a price upon his head; nor even for Paris itself, which will, without doubt, be put to fire and sword. It therefore remains for us to evade so terrible a misfortune; and we cannot render a greater service to the king, than by preserving for him the most magnificent city of his kingdom, the capital of his country, and a population which has ever exhibited the greatest loyalty and devotion to its monarchs."

"But, Mademoiselle;" objected the marshal; "remember that if our own troops had not approached the capital, neither would those of the crown have done so."

"I only remember, sir;" replied the princess in an accent of proud rebuke; "that while we amuse ourselves by idle argument, M. de Condé is in danger in your very faubourgs; and that it will be an eternal grief and disgrace for Paris, if he should perish there for want of assistance. You can help him, gentlemen; do so therefore, and forthwith."

Her spirited remonstrance produced its effect: the council rose, and retired to deliberate; while MADEMOISELLE, agitated by exertion and anxiety, knelt down in the bay of a window, to pray for the success of her undertaking. Before the close of the deliberations she, however, became impatient, for she knew the value of the time which was so weakly lost in inaction; when, as she

was rapidly pacing to and fro the hall, inventing and rejecting a score of expedients in the event of a failure with the council, the members at length reappeared; and the Marshal de l'Hôpital announced to her that himself and his colleagues were prepared to obey whatever order she might think fit to issue.



CHAPTER II.

BATTLE OF THE PORTE ST. ANTOINE — MADEMOISELLE TURNS THE CANNON OF THE BASTILLE AGAINST THE ROYAL FORCES—RETREAT OF THE KING'S ARMY—ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF CONDÉ TO MADEMOISELLE—HER SUSPICIONS OF CONDÉ—FLIGHT OF THE COURT TO ST. DENIS—MEETING AT THE TOWN-HALL—EXTRAORDINARY PARTY BADGE—NEW DILEMMA OF MONSIEUR—PROJECT OF AN UNION—ATTACK ON THE TOWN-HALL—THE PROVOST OF THE MERCHANTS — REMOVAL OF THE COURT TO PONTOISE—MONSIEUR DECLARED LIEUTENANT-GENERAL OF THE KINGDOM BY THE PARLIAMENT—HIS WANT OF AUTHORITY IN THE CAPITAL.

Not another moment was wasted. De Jarzé hastened to return to The Prince, to inform him that the troops were to be allowed to enter the city; while, at the same time, the Marquis de la Boulaie went at all speed to cause the Porte St. Honoré to be opened to those who were awaiting ingress from Poissy. Meanwhile; hostilities had already commenced in the faubourgs, and the report of artillery resounded through the streets of Paris. Mademoiselle felt that the die was now cast, and was

naturally anxious as to the issue. She consequently determined upon going to judge for herself of the progress of affairs; and accordingly left the town-hall, and turned in the direction of the Porte St. Antoine, attended by the Marshal de l'Hôpital, who was not, however, destined long to swell her suite; for, as she descended the steps, a man approached, and pointing to him with his finger, asked the princess how she could permit that Mazarinite to follow her; adding that if she were not satisfied with his conduct she had only to say so, and they would drown him. MADEMOISELLE replied, that so far from desiring anything of the kind, she had every reason to be extremely satisfied; the marshal having acceded to all her requests. "In that case," was the retort, "all's right; let him go back then to the town-hall, and be careful to walk upright." M. de l'Hôpital awaited no second bidding; but, having respectfully saluted the princess, rapidly retraced his steps, while she pursued her way undauntedly towards the barrier.[1]

Nor did this perseverance exact a slight degree of courage, when the supineness of those who should have been the most active is calmly considered. The Prince, despite his numerical inferiority, tenaciously maintained his ground; and Turenne attacked him with the additional stimulus of emulation. The Duke d'Orleans had shut himself up in his palace, and the Cardinal de Retz had followed his example; while the parliament remained neutral and passive, awaiting the termination of the combat before they ventured to fulminate their decrees.

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

The populace, taking the tone from those who should have been their leaders, and being equally terrified at the incursion of either party, had closed the gates of the city, and would not suffer any individual, whatever might be his rank, to pass in or out. On reaching the Rue de la Tixeranderie the princess was subjected to a frightful spectacle. The Duke de la Rochefoucauld had just been struck in the face by a musket ball, which had entered the corner of his right eye, and escaped through the left, so that his eyeballs appeared to be dropping from their sockets, and the whole of his features were deluged with blood. His son supported him with one hand, and M. de Gourville, one of his most attached friends, by the other; for he was deprived of sight. He was still on horseback; but his white vest was so saturated with blood, as well as those of his supporters, that the original colour of their attire could not be distinguished.

MADEMOISELLE approached the wretched group, to assure the duke of her regret and sympathy; but while the young Prince de Marsillac and M. de Gourville answered her with their tears, the wounded man remained impassive, his sense of hearing having failed beneath the shock. She therefore left them to pursue their melancholy way; and was endeavouring to shake off the sentiment of horror which had taken possession of her, when, at the entrance of the Rue St. Antoine, she encountered M. de Guitaut, pale and sinking, with his vest thrown open, and supported by a soldier, who had great difficulty in enabling him to escape from the scene of carnage. The dialogue which ensued is characteristic.

"Ha! my poor Guitaut," exclaimed the princess; "what is the matter? what has happened to you?"

"A ball through my body;" was the reply.

"Is the wound fatal?"

"I think not."

"Keep up your spirits then." And once more MADEMOISELLE passed on.

The next victim whom she encountered was M. de Valon, who had accompanied her in her expedition to Orleans; he was badly wounded, and utterly disheartened. "Ah, Madam," he gasped out as she drew near; "we are lost!"

"By no means," said MADEMOISELLE; "we are saved. I command in Paris to-day, as I commanded at Orleans."

"There is still a hope then;" murmured the stricken soldier; "all may yet be retrieved."

This confidence augmented the ardour of the princess; and she approached the barrier surrounded by the wounded, whom their comrades were removing in every direction. On all sides she heard the eulogy of M. de Condé, who was declared to have exceeded all his former feats. He appeared to be gifted with ubiquity, and his perpetual presence sustained the courage of the troops.

MADEMOISELLE lost no time in giving an order to the captain of the guard to permit the free passage of The Prince and his adherents; and having done this, she entered a house in the immediate neighbourhood of the Bastille, whence she could command all that passed in the street. She had scarcely seated herself when M. de Condé paid her a visit. He was covered with dust and blood, his hair matted, his cuirass battered with blows, and he carried his naked sword in his hand, having lost the scabbard. As he approached the princess, he put his weapon into the hand of her equerry, and exclaimed despondingly

that he was wretched; that he had lost all his friends; for that the Duke de Nemours, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, and M. de Clinchamp were fatally wounded.

MADEMOISELLE assured him that he exaggerated the evil; for that, although grievously hurt, there was no fear for their lives. The surgeon had already answered for the safety of M. de Clinchamp; M. de la Rochefoucauld was by no means beyond hope; while M. de Nemours was still less injured than either of the others.

Although greatly comforted by this assurance, M. de Condé, nevertheless, could not suppress his grief; but with a brief apology, he threw himself upon a seat; and there the hero of a dozen victories, covered as he was with the blood of his enemies, and surrounded by the plaudits of his troops, gave a free loose to his emotion;—the warrior was forgotten, while "the strong man wept."

The weakness was, however, only momentary; and rousing himself by a powerful effort, he requested that the princess would give an order for the admission of the baggage which was outside the gates; and consent to remain where she then was, that he might know where to find her on any new emergency, as he could not spare another moment from the troops.

MADEMOISELLE urged him to retire with all his force into the city; but he firmly refused to do so, declaring that he would rather perish than retreat before the army of Mazarin; while she need feel no uneasiness for her friends, as he should henceforth confine himself to mere skirmishing; and pledged himself that he would march all the troops of *Monsieur* in safety into the capital. He then reclaimed his sword; and having taken leave of the princess, sprang upon a fresh horse and galloped off.

His presence had become requisite, for the battle was

raging more fiercely than ever. The royal army had attacked simultaneously the gate of St. Denis, and the faubourg St. Antoine. M. de Condé inquired where the Marshal de Turenne was acting; and upon being told that he commanded the attack in the faubourg, he instantly hastened in that direction, considering that the hottest of the fight must necessarily take place upon that spot; while he satisfied himself by sending some cavalry to the barrier. His judgment proved to be correct, for M. de Turenne was advancing with his whole strength on that side, the other demonstration having simply been a feint. The royal force amounted to between ten and eleven thousand men, while the troops of M. de Condé did not exceed five thousand; and he consequently commenced his operations by barricading himself as well as he could in the principal street within sight of the enemy, detaching a portion of his men to guard all the lateral avenues. This done, he no longer remembered the promise which he had so lately given to MADEMOISELLE; and a most fearful engagement took place, in which those who followed his movements declared that his exploits were almost superhuman.

He was suddenly informed that the enemy had forced the strong barricade of Picpus; that the infantry had behaved admirably; but that the cavalry had been seized with a fearful panic, and had fled in such disorder that they had swept back with them all they encountered on their way. M. de Condé accordingly placed himself at the head of a hundred musketeers, and rallying around him all the officers whom he could collect, and a few volunteers, made a rush upon the barricade, which he retook; and drove the enemy, (consisting of four regiments,) before him like a cloud of dust.

MADEMOISELLE meanwhile retained her post, where she was joined by the President Viole, who assured her that *Monsieur* had entered into a treaty with the court, and that it was this circumstance which had induced him to remain passive. The indignation of the princess was extreme, and she immediately repeated the report to the Count de Fiesque, and the Duchess de Châtillon; reproaching the latter with the part which she had taken in the affair, and declaring that, for so clever a woman, she must be "easily misled if she suffered herself to be deluded by so absurd a rumour;" adding that she sincerely believed, should *Monsieur* discover its authors, he would throw them all out of the window. That she regretted as much as the duchess herself could do that His Royal Highness had not made himself more prominent, a step which she had strongly urged him to take; but it was not, therefore, to be inferred that he had played M. de Condé false; as he was incapable of such treachery.[1] This reproof silenced Madame de Châtillon; although it failed to convince the bystanders of the accuracy of the judgment which MADEMOISELLE had formed of the motives and principles of her father.

The princess had already despatched an accredited messenger to the Bastille, to demand the intention of the governor; and this functionary, who was no other than M. de Louviers, the son of M. de Broussel, replied, that if he were authorized so to do by an order from *Monsieur*, he would obey whatever commands she might give. MADEMOISELLE accordingly sent the Count de Béthune to make this communication to the Duke

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

d'Orleans, who forwarded the required order by the Prince de Guimené; while, on his return, M. de Béthune announced to the princess that *Monsieur* was about to join her; a piece of intelligence which she immediately communicated to M. de Condé, who very shortly afterwards arrived. He was still in the same disordered attire in which she had previously seen him, but his depression was at an end, and he entered the apartment with a smile upon his lips. The first care of MADEMOISELLE was to prevail upon him not to reproach her father with the equivocal part which he had played throughout the day; which, after some difficulty, he conceded. *Monsieur* subsequently arrived in his turn, and met The Prince as cheerfully as though nothing extraordinary had occurred, and that his own bearing had been immaculate. He then congratulated him upon his prowess, and asked a number of questions relating to the engagement; after which he digressed to the dead and wounded, for whom he expressed much sympathy. Finally, it was resolved between himself and M. de Condé that the army should retire within the walls at nightfall; and then *Monsieur* proceeded to the town-hall to offer his acknowledgments to the corporate bodies; and The Prince returned to the troops.

They had no sooner taken leave than MADEMOISELLE resolved to repair in person to the Bastille, which she had never previously visited; and this done, she ascended to the towers, whence, by means of a telescope, she distinguished a great number of people collected on the heights of Charonne, as well as horses and carriages, when it instantly struck her that the king was there in person, as was indeed the fact. Towards Bagnolet, in

the valley, she could also see the royal army preparing for a new attack, and recognise the staff of the different general officers. As she continued anxiously to watch their movements, she observed them detach a strong body of their cavalry to intercept the communication between the faubourg and the moat; which, had they done it at an earlier period, must at once have decided the issue of the struggle; while, as she foresaw that even were it now accomplished it must create considerable annoyance to their own troops, she forthwith despatched a page to M. de Condé, to inform him of the manœuvre. Her messenger found him on the top of the belfry of the abbey of St. Antoine, where, profiting by a momentary respite, he was also busy in reconnoitring the besieging forces; and finding his own observations confirmed by those of the princess, he sent an order for all his troops to march forthwith into the city. On the return of her page with these tidings, MADEMOISELLE commanded the cannon of the fortress to be pointed in the direction of the royal army; and gave stringent orders that, should the measure become essential, they should be discharged without hesitation.

Having done this, without paying the slightest attention to the consternation created by her words, she left the Bastille, and returned to the house of which she had previously taken possession, in order that she might see the troops march in. Terror had spread through the ranks, as neither officers nor men expected any quarter; but when they found that MADEMOISELLE was at the gate, they raised a shout of joy, declaring that they would fight to the last; knowing that should they eventually be compelled to give way, their retreat was

assured, for that she would never suffer the barrier to remain closed against them when they had no longer any hope of success. At the same moment M. de Condé sent to request that the princess would cause some wine to be distributed, which she did without loss of time; and as the troops passed under the window at which she stood, they hailed her with hearty acclamations.

Meanwhile the situation of The Prince himself was perilous in the extreme. Hotly pursued by the forces of M. de Turenne, the number who fell on all sides during this retreat was frightful; and as the royalist army had, moreover, been reinforced by the division under the Marshal de la Ferté-Senectère, the ranks of the Fronde tottered on every side; the musketry resounded within a thousand paces of the house in which MADEMOISELLE was keeping her anxious watch; and for an instant The Prince was compelled to give way, and was in the most imminent peril. With his back against the outworks, and contending with those by whom he was opposed with an energy which was rapidly exhausting his strength, in order to give his men time to retreat to the barrier, M. de Condé was about to be overwhelmed by a force that quadrüpled his own; when the summit of the Bastille suddenly flamed out, the cannon were discharged in rapid succession, and the ranks of the royalists tottered, swayed, and retreated in bewilderment.

MADEMOISELLE had decided the fortune of the fight; and had just, to use the words of Mazarin, "killed her royal husband with the ordnance of the Bastille." It is certain that the heroism of the princess upon this occasion outweighed her policy; for neither Louis nor those about him were ever likely to forgive so bold an act of disloyalty.

So vigorous a measure, meanwhile, saved M. de Condé. The royalists, totally unprepared for such a demonstration of what they necessarily considered as the popular feeling, halted in a state of helpless indecision; during which The Prince rallied his troops, made a charge, and repulsed M. de Turenne; thus effecting his retreat with safety. The blow was terrible to the court party, which had felt so sure of success, that the queen, who had remained at St. Denis, sent forward a carriage to bring back M. de Condé a prisoner; and as the cardinal had friends in the city who forwarded to him intelligence of all that occurred, he no sooner heard the cannon of the Bastille, than he exclaimed joyfully: "Admirable! there are the guns of the fortress firing upon The Prince!"

Some one ventured to suggest that the attack might probably be upon their own troops; and this remark was followed up by another still more pertinent, namely, that MADEMOISELLE had arrived at the Bastille, and that the governor was firing a salute. The Marshal de Villeroi, who overheard the words, saw the truth at a glance; and shaking his head, said gravely: "If your judgment be correct, and that MADEMOISELLE is indeed at the Bastille, I know her well enough to be convinced that the salute, such as it is, has been fired by her own hand."

An hour subsequently this was found to be the case, and the queen vowed an eternal enmity to the belligerent princess.

The loss to the royalist army was considerable, especially as regarded the rank of the individuals. M. de St. Mesgrin, lieutenant-general, and second in command of the light cavalry, was killed; as was also the Marquis de Nantouillet. M. de Fouilloux, an ensign in the

guards, and one of the favourites of the young king, fell by the hand of The Prince himself; and Paul de Mancini, the nephew of the cardinal, an amiable youth of sixteen, full of the most brilliant promise, was wounded at the head of his regiment, and died shortly afterwards. When The Prince had seen the rear of his troops safely within the barrier, he entered in his turn; and the gates once more closed, he hurried to make his acknowledgments to MADEMOISELLE for her bold and well-timed assistance; who, in reply to his compliment, remarked upon the admirable appearance of his troops, saying that she saw little difference between them when at Étampes, and now that they had just sustained a siege and two serious engagements; terminating her eulogy by exclaiming: "God preserve them after these perils from those of a negotiation!"

M. de Condé flushed, and remained silent, which more than satisfied the princess that she had driven the arrow home; for she had already been long enough involved in faction, to discover that scarcely one individual with whom she was brought into contact was exempt from intrigue or double dealing of some description; but feeling that the pause which ensued must be painful to The Prince, while it was impolitic as regarded her own interests, she hastened to add that she trusted he would at least pledge himself to her, that there should be no more secret treaties. This he readily promised, and with apparent good faith.[1]

MADEMOISELLE then inquired for the Marquis de Flamarin, whom she had not seen since the morning, and

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

learnt with extreme sorrow that he was missing, and that all his friends were ignorant of his fate. As the princess was sincerely attached to him, and had not forgotten the services which he rendered to her at Orleans, she despatched a number of her attendants to obtain tidings, and after great exertions his body was found pierced by a ball. By an extraordinary coincidence, for which it was impossible to account, he had a rope about his neck; and thus the prophecy, which had turned to a jest upon his lips when he took leave of MADEMOISELLE, had met with a mysterious accomplishment.[1]

The populace of Paris were indefatigable. They carried away the dead, and buried them: they gave wine to the soldiers who remained under arms, and refreshment and help to the wounded; exerting themselves with all their energy, and shouting continually, "Long live the king, and no Mazarin!" The cardinal had no sooner ascertained that the troops of the Fronde had re-entered Paris in triumph than he carried off the sovereign to St. Denis; but even this flight was not effected without considerable panic; and the court-party did not reach their destination until midnight, after many false alarms, and having several times halted, and prepared to oppose an imagined enemy in pursuit. Nothing of the kind was, however, attempted, the troops of M. de Condé being overwhelmed with fatigue.

The Prince was now in possession of the capital, which, singularly enough, he had secured by a retreat; but although his military position was undeniable, he had as yet attained no civil authority, which

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

was absolutely necessary to enable him to retain the power he had acquired. It was consequently determined that a general assembly should be held at the town-hall, at which the civic dignitaries should be invited to delegate a portion of their authority to *Monsieur* and himself; and that an Union should be formed between the two princes and the parliament. The attempt was hazardous, but they had no alternative, as money was required to pay the troops, and to make new levies. The assembly was therefore appointed for the 4th of July; and in order to recognise his own followers in the crowd, M. de Condé desired each of them to attach a few straws to his hat.

The populace, attracted by this singular decoration, immediately adopted it in their turn, believing it to be the symbol of the faction; and their zeal was so great that while the men, in imitation of the troops, affixed it to their hats, the women adopted it as a shoulder-knot; and in a couple of hours every one who appeared in the streets without this appendage, was assailed by cries of "The straw! the straw!" and where any were impolitic enough to resist the popular clamour, they were unsparingly beaten by the mob.

This demonstration was sufficient to overthrow the uncertain courage of *Monsieur;* and accordingly, when the hour of council arrived, he began to be indisposed, and furious against M. de Condé, who urged him to fulfil his promise. He declared he would do nothing of the sort, for that this device of the straw was quite sufficient to occasion a riot. The Prince, in despair at this pusillanimity, addressed himself to MADEMOISELLE, assuring her that it was absolutely necessary to the safety of the faction that His Royal Highness should show himself at

the town-hall; and that if he persevered in his refusal, he could not answer for the consequences. All remonstrances nevertheless proved useless for a considerable time, and he was evidently ill-disposed to M. de Condé; but suddenly, at the eleventh hour, he determined on attending the meeting which had been fixed for two o'clock, probably remembering that his own interests were more deeply involved in the measures which might be adopted than those of any other individual in the capital; and that they would, beyond all doubt, suffer from his absence. As he proceeded through the city he gradually regained his courage, for he soon perceived that every one was provided with a bunch of straw; and that even MADEMOISELLE, whom he encountered by the way, had a similar decoration attached to her fan by a bow of blue ribbon, which was the party colour. He had lingered so long that the streets were choked by the mob, and he had great difficulty in advancing; while the whole of the populace were in a state of excitement, and were uttering fierce threats against the Marshal de l'Hôpital, and the provost of the merchants, whom they loudly qualified as Mazarinites, and overwhelmed with threatening and insult.

When *Monsieur* and The Prince arrived, the chamber at once proceeded to business, and the meeting was opened by reading a letter from the king, which had just been received, and which demanded that the assembly should be delayed for the space of eight days. It was, however, unanimously rejected, and at once laid aside. His Royal Highness and M. de Condé then made their acknowledgments to the meeting for the assistance which had been afforded to them by the city of Paris at the engagement of the Porte St. Antoine, but both carefully avoided

all reference to their anticipations for the future. *Monsieur* expected his full recognition as Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, which had already been accorded to him by the parliament; as well as unlimited authority to issue such orders as he might deem expedient, by virtue of the power vested in him by the king, so long as His Majesty should remain a prisoner in the hands of Mazarin; declared to be the enemy of the state, and the disturber of the public peace, to be banished for ever from the soil of France, and to have a price set upon his head, by a decree of parliament; which decree had since been confirmed by the king himself; while M. de Condé, also conformably to the declaration of parliament, looked forward to his nomination as generalissimo of the royal forces.

The proposition of an Union which was to have been made by certain of the councillors, was not even mooted; nor were the individual interests of the princes alluded to by any person present, although it was for this precise purpose that the assembly had been convoked; and consequently after lingering for a short time, in order to afford the different members an opportunity of suggesting the settlement of these claims, and finding that no effort was made on any hand to enforce them, M. de Condé ultimately lost patience, and rose, motioning to *Monsieur* to follow him; and immediately afterwards, having saluted the meeting, they both retired by the great entrance which opened on the Place de Grève.

As the princes left the town-hall much dissatisfied, it is probable that their countenances betrayed their annoyance, for some of the mob remarked their discomfiture, and loudly demanded its cause; upon which they

replied that they had quitted the assembly, as the Union had not only remained unsigned, but had actually not been even proposed. On receiving this intelligence the populace, who desired nothing more than a commotion, began to exclaim that all those who met at the town-hall were nothing better than Mazarinites, who, on the day of the battle at the Porte St. Antoine, would have left The Prince to perish if MADEMOISELLE had not compelled them to assist him; and in a few minutes cries of "The Union! The Union!" burst from every quarter of the crowd; and at the same time a volley of musketry shattered several of the windows of the town-hall.

The terror which these shouts, and the balls, which after having shivered the glass of the casements, buried themselves in the walls of the council-chamber, caused among the assembled functionaries, was so great, that the greater number of its occupants threw themselves on the floor, believing that their last hour was come, and began to pray with the utmost devotion; but matters became still worse when a fresh discharge of bullets, instead of striking diagonally like the first, entered the apartment horizontally. Some soldiers, more experienced than the mob, had taken possession of the opposite houses, and were firing point-blank into the building; in consequence of which fact two or three shots took effect; and the groans of the wounded, and the shuddering spasms of the dying, mingled with the general confusion. The universal idea was, thenceforward, flight; but this was rendered impossible by the fact that the mob had invaded all the issues of the town-hall, and closed and barricaded all the doors,

piling before them faggots of wood to which they set fire, and thus, for a time, wrapt the whole building in flame.[1]

While this was going forward the princes returned to the Luxembourg, never suspecting the violent manner in which the populace were enforcing their demands; and as *Monsieur* immediately retired, having suffered greatly from heat during the meeting, M. de Condé remained in the anteroom with MADEMOISELLE, the Duchess de Sully,[2] the Countess de Fiesque, and Madame de Villars, where he amused himself in reading some letters which had been brought to him by a trumpeter of M. de Turenne; and he was still intent upon their contents, when a citizen, pale with terror, and gasping for breath, burst into the apartment, exclaiming that the town-hall was on fire, and that the people were shooting and killing each other.

M. de Condé immediately informed *Monsieur* of the circumstance, whose terror was so great, that, forgetting he was not dressed, and that there were ladies in the anteroom, he rushed out of his apartment in his shirt, imploring The Prince to hasten instantly to the scene of the disaster, and to pacify the people. M. de Condé, however, replied with some haughtiness that, although there were few things which he should hesitate to undertake in order to serve His Royal Highness, his presence on the present occasion would be of no avail, as he understood nothing about sedition, and was always a coward in a mob; but that he would advise him to send the Duke de Beaufort,

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

[2] The Duchess de Sully was the daughter of the Chancellor Seguier, and niece to the Bishop of Meaux.

who was well known and very popular with the people, a fact which would render him much more useful than himself in such an emergency. M. de Beaufort was accordingly despatched to the town-hall without loss of time; and accepted the mission readily, declaring that he would soon bring all the rebels to their senses.

MADEMOISELLE, who felt some doubts as to his success, and who was not sorry, moreover, to exhibit the extent of her own influence over the public mind, followed her father and M. de Condé to the cabinet of His Royal Highness, and suggested that, should they deem it expedient, she would herself go, and endeavour to allay the tumult; adding that it would strengthen their party if this opportunity were seized to induce the Marshal de l'Hôpital and the provost of the merchants to give in their resignation, which would be a triumph for the people; while His Royal Highness could not give a more stringent proof of his authority than by withdrawing them in safety from the hands of an infuriated mob.

Monsieur, delighted by any expedient which did not involve his own safety or comfort, conceded the point at once; and as he had by this time conceived a high idea of the generalship of the princess, he bade her hasten to accomplish her project, if, indeed, it could be achieved; while M. de Condé, struck with the extent of the advantage to be gained, made no other reply than by offering to bear her company; a proposal MADEMOISELLE, however, declined, being desirous of reaping the laurels in her own person. All the household of *Monsieur* and The Prince followed in her train; and she was accompanied in her coach by Mesdames de Sully and de Villars, and the two countesses, her usual aides-de-camp, who were considerably alarmed at this new adventure.

They had scarcely passed the gates of the Luxembourg when they saw a man lying dead in the street, which increased their distaste for the expedition; but the princess, who had lately become inured to the spectacle of violent and premature death, bade them refrain from looking about them, and trust their safety with confidence to her prudence. Her first idea was to approach the town-hall by the square of the Grève; but she fortunately changed her mind, as the risk would have been immense; and the party had scarcely reached the termination of the rue de Gêvres, in order to cross the Pont-Neuf, when they met the dead body of M. Ferrand, a parliamentary councillor, who was the personal friend of the princess, and whom she sincerely regretted.

As the carriage moved slowly along, she questioned all the persons whom she encountered; and learnt that a comptroller of accounts named Miron, who was known to her, had likewise perished; and, moreover, that the Vicar of St. John-in-Grève had, in his anxiety to save his curate who was in the midst of the mob, rushed from his church, lifting above his head the host which he had taken from the altar; but that, despite this holy ægis, the miserable fanatics had fired upon him. On hearing the detail of this enormity all the suite of MADEMOISELLE gathered about her coach, and implored her to forego her purpose; but, although she consented not to pursue her way, she equally refused to return to the Luxembourg without an effort to allay the storm; and she, consequently, sent messenger after messenger to the town-hall, to bring her a precise report of the revolt. Not one of them, however, returned; and she then determined to despatch a trumpeter with orders to sound the appel, and thus attract attention to her

message, but her attendants were unable to find one; and finally, after a considerable time had elapsed, she drove towards the hôtel de Nemours; when, on traversing the Petit-Pont, the wheel of her carriage became locked in that of the vehicle in which the dead were nightly conveyed from the Hôtel-Dieu to their common grave. The death-cart was heavily laden with corpses, and the princess had barely time to throw herself to the other side of the coach, in order to avoid the contact of the arms and legs which protruded from between the rails of the waggon, and entered the window of her own vehicle. On arriving at the residence of M. de Nemours, she again failed in procuring a trumpeter; and having inquired into the progress of his own convalescence, and learnt that his wound had proved to be very slight, she finally returned with great reluctance to the Luxembourg to report her failure.

Monsieur, whose terror was increased by all he heard, urged her to make another attempt, to which she consented; and again set forth, accompanied by the Duchess de Sully and the Countess de Frontenac who would not abandon her, and attended by an inconsiderable retinue; for, as it was midnight when the princess returned to the palace, most of her attendants had imagined that she would make no further effort that night. She found the streets deserted save by numerous patrols, each of which afforded her an escort; and as her carriage stopped in the place de Grève, a man laid his hand upon the window, and asked if M. de Condé was with her. She answered in the negative; upon which he immediately walked rapidly away, and by the light of the flambeaux which were in front of the vehicle, she discovered that he

carried a weapon beneath his arm. Just at that moment, M. de Beaufort approached, caused the coach to be drawn up at the town-hall, and assisted the princess to alight. With his assistance she passed across some beams which were still smoking, and entered the building. All was silent and deserted, and they traversed the lower portion of the edifice without meeting a single human being; but while MADEMOISELLE was examining with considerable curiosity the distribution of the council-chamber, the maître-d'hôtel of the city entered cautiously, and informed her that the provost of the merchants was in a neighbouring apartment, and requested the honour of an interview with Her Royal Highness. This was precisely what MADEMOISELLE desired; and leaving her ladies in the hall, she followed the messenger, accompanied by the Counts de Fiesque, de Béthune, and de Préfontaine.

In a small dark room she found the provost, disguised by an enormous wig, but perfectly calm and self-possessed; and informed him that she had been sent by *Monsieur* to his assistance, a commission which she had gladly undertaken, having always felt a great esteem for him personally. She would not, she said moreover, enter into any unpleasant retrospection, as he had probably believed that he was doing his duty while opposing her interests, and that persons were frequently misled by those whom they considered as their friends.

He expressed in reply how deeply he felt the honour of her good opinion, and declared that he should ever remember the extent of his obligation to both herself and *Monsieur;* assuring her that he had acted upon principle, but that, as he was quite conscious of his unpopularity, he was ready, if MADEMOISELLE would cause

pens and paper to be brought to him, at once to place his resignation in her hands. This, however, the princess refused to permit, merely promising to mention his wish to *Monsieur*, who could send for the proffered resignation should he deem it desirable; but decidedly declining to become its medium.

The Duke de Beaufort terminated the discussion by asking the provost how he intended to dispose of himself; and was answered that all he wished was to be enabled to return to his own house, where he believed that he should be safe; upon which the duke left the room to reconnoitre a side door opening upon a retired street; and finding it perfectly free, he returned in search of the discomfited functionary, who appeared highly delighted at his prospect of escape, and lost no time, after he had addressed a parting compliment to MADEMOISELLE, in profiting by the discovery. The princess remained in the apartment until the return of M. de Beaufort, when she returned to the hall, where she found the two ladies who were awaiting her in a state of great alarm, another musket having been fired in the square; and they were no sooner pacified than she proceeded in search of the Marshal de l'Hôpital, but learnt that he had already succeeded in accomplishing his exit through one of the back windows.

As the day was beginning to dawn, and the mob to re-assemble, the princess thought it prudent to return to the palace, lest her lengthened sojourn at the town-hall should excite suspicion of her motives; and she accordingly re-entered her carriage amid the shouts and plaudits of the populace, who called down blessings upon her head, declaring that all she did was well done;

and with these flattering sounds ringing in her ears, she drove off at once to the Louvre, and hastened to secure a little rest after her fatigue and exertion.

In the evening the Count de Fiesque waited upon Her Royal Highness, to inform her that he had given a detail of all her proceedings to *Monsieur*, who had commanded the Count de Béthune and himself to go to the provost, and to demand from him the resignation which he had proffered, taking with them M. de Préfontaine, who had been present at the time. The precaution was, however, unnecessary, as he tendered it without hesitation ; and on the following evening, M. de Broussel, whose sentiments were well known, was elected to the office. A meeting took place at the town-hall, in which his appointment was recognised, after which he proceeded to the Luxembourg and took the oath to *Monsieur* as it was customary to do to the sovereign. The president de Thou was at the same time entrusted with the duties of secretary of state.[1]

The cardinal no sooner learned these details than he removed the king from St. Denis to Pontoise, in order that he might be in the centre of Turenne's army, and an order was despatched to the parliamentary deputies to follow him ; but as they raised objections to this measure, they were commanded to remain at St. Denis. On the following day they, however, received renewed directions to join the court, which they immediately communicated to the authorities of the capital, who issued a decree enforcing their instant return to Paris ; upon which *Monsieur*, The Prince, and the Duke de Beaufort, (who had

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

succeeded the Marshal de l'Hôpital in the government of the city,) placed themselves at the head of eight hundred infantry and twelve hundred cavalry, to escort them into the gates, and to impress upon the populace that they were protecting them from an imminent danger; while the court replied to this demonstration by passing decrees in the council which annulled those promulgated by the parliament; and in which they declared all their proceedings to be void, not only in the past but also in the future; even ordaining that the monies destined to defray their expenses should henceforth be paid in such places as His Majesty should select for his residence.

These were again answered in a proposition made by Broussel himself, that *Monsieur* should be declared Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom, as he had been during the minority of the sovereign, with full power to act as he saw fit; and should retain this rank so long as the cardinal remained in the country, using every means to compel his expulsion; while M. de Condé should be requested to accept the command of the army, under the authority of His Royal Highness. A copy of this proposition was, moreover, despatched to all the parliaments throughout the kingdom, who were requested to pass a similar decree; but with the exception of that of Bordeaux, no such concession was made, nor was any deliberation held upon the subject; while in Brittany a demurrer was even resolved to all those which it had previously rendered, until the Spanish troops then in France should have left the country.

Nor was *Monsieur* fated to experience a greater degree of obedience to his new dignity from the governors of the respective provinces, from whom, with one solitary excep-

tion, he received no reply to his appeal; the court having warned them by a solemn decree that the royal council did not recognise the act of parliament which established the office; while, even in Paris, his authority was so far from being established, that two criminals, condemned to be hanged for having fired the town-hall, being about to suffer for their crime, the city companies who were ordered to attend the execution refused to sanction it by their presence.[1]

[1] Mémoires du Cardinal de Retz.

CHAPTER III.

DIVISIONS AMONG THE PRINCES—QUARREL OF THE DUKES DE NEMOURS AND BEAUFORT—FATAL DUEL—DEATH OF M. DE NEMOURS—FORBEARANCE OF M. DE BEAUFORT—THE PRINCE DE CONDÉ RECEIVES A BLOW—ANSWER OF THE PRESIDENT BELLIÈVRE—DEATH OF THE YOUNG DUKE DE VALOIS—SEVERE INDISPOSITION OF THE PRINCESS DE CONDÉ—RENEWED HOPES OF MADEMOISELLE—RECONCILIATION OF MADEMOISELLE AND THE DUKE DE LORRAINE—NEW OPPOSITION OF THE PARLIAMENT—RESIGNATION AND RETIREMENT OF MAZARIN—RESIGNATION OF THE DUKE DE BEAUFORT AND M. BROUSSEL—RETURN OF THE KING TO PARIS—HE DISLODGES MADEMOISELLE FROM THE TUILERIES—ALARM OF MONSIEUR—REFUSES TO LODGE MADEMOISELLE IN THE LUXEMBOURG—MONSIEUR LEAVES PARIS—MADEMOISELLE RETIRES TO PONS—POSITION OF THE KINGDOM—DECLARATION OF LÈSE-MAJESTÉ AGAINST THE PRINCES—THE PRINCE DE CONDÉ AND THE DUKE DE LORRAINE CONTINUE THEIR MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE PROVINCES.

In this emergency a council was formed of which *Monsieur* was the president; an arrangement that renewed the old enmity between the Duke de Nemours and his brother-in-law M. de Beaufort, who had some altercation as to precedence, in which M. de Nemours exhibited great irritability and haughtiness, while M. de Beaufort displayed considerable forbearance. As the former refused all concession, although still confined to the house from the weakness consequent upon his

wounds, *Monsieur* and the Prince de Condé became alarmed at the possible consequences of his intemperance, and with considerable difficulty at length succeeded in obtaining his pledge not to proceed to any act of violence during the next four and twenty hours. Despite this arrangement, however, MADEMOISELLE received private information that a duel would take place; and she forthwith despatched a couple of her friends to seek out the Duke de Beaufort in the gardens of the Tuileries, where the quarrel was stated to have been renewed. Their report was calculated to allay her fears, for they asserted that he was quietly walking with four or five of his friends, and that nothing in either his conversation or manner induced a belief that he had gone there with any hostile intention. A different impression had, however, taken possession of Madame de Nemours, who had written in great haste to Madame de Chavigny, to entreat that she would closely watch the movements of the two brothers-in-law; and as the latter lady immediately communicated the alarm of the duchess to MADEMOISELLE, she mentioned the fact to *Monsieur*, who chanced at this time to visit her.

His Royal Highness, to whom it was not convenient to give credence to such a rumour, treated the matter with contempt, and remarked with some bitterness to the princess, that she was constantly fancying quarrels, which was the very way to engender them; after which he proceeded in his turn to the Tuileries, to the celebrated *restaurant* of Renard, which had become the fashionable promenade. MADEMOISELLE followed him, but at some distance, having been detained in conver-

sation with M. de Jarzé; and as she was ascending the steps which led to the terrace of Renard, one of the pages of Madame de Châtillon grasped her dress, and having attracted her attention, said hurriedly, that the duchess had sent him to apprize Her Royal Highness that M. de Nemours and his brother-in-law were about to meet at the Petits-Pères; and that she entreated her to inform *Monsieur* of the fact. The princess instantly walked to the bench upon which her father was seated, and having communicated the intelligence, had the gratification of seeing him at length aroused into an alarm equal to her own. He hurriedly desired the Counts de Fiesque and Fontrailles who were with him, to proceed immediately to the place mentioned, and to prevent the encounter; but they arrived too late; the procrastination of Gaston having, as usual, rendered his interference of no avail. The parties had met; and M. de Nemours had fallen by the hand of his wife's brother.

On receiving this fatal intelligence, *Monsieur* instantly returned home; while MADEMOISELLE and The Prince proceeded to the residence of the unhappy duchess, whom they found in a state bordering on distraction; for not only the melancholy fact itself, but also the circumstances by which it was attended, were too well calculated to overcome her with wretchedness. Trusting to the pledge given by M. de Nemours, neither the Duke d'Orleans nor The Prince had taken any precautions to avert the catastrophe; while M. de Beaufort had made every effort in his power to avoid the meeting, and even when he could no longer decline it, had raised difficulties as to its execution, alleging that he had several gentlemen in his company of whom he

could not rid himself, and that consequently the encounter must be deferred until another opportunity.

On receiving this last reply M. de Nemours had returned home, where, having unfortunately found an equal number of his own friends, he renewed his challenge to M. de Beaufort; and they all left the Tuileries; after which the duel took place in the horse-market, behind the Hôtel Vendôme. Three of the Duke de Beaufort's witnesses were dangerously wounded, two of them so much so that they died within four and twenty hours; and, as we have already stated, M. de Nemours himself fell.

Even to the last the Duke de Beaufort had endeavoured to appease the blind rage of his unnatural relative; and when M. de Nemours approached him with pistols already loaded, and swords already drawn, he exclaimed deprecatingly; "Let us not be guilty of this shame, my brother. Let us rather forget the past, and be reconciled." The appeal, touching as it was, nevertheless produced no effect; and the unhappy Duke de Nemours fell a victim to his own indomitable temper.

The report of fire-arms drew to the spot several persons who chanced to be walking in the gardens of the Hôtel Vendôme; and among others the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, who sprang towards the dying man, and raised him in his arms. He had, however, only time to press the hand of the horror-stricken ecclesiastic, and to murmur the name of the Saviour, when he fell back upon the shoulder of his supporter, a lifeless corse.[1]

On the following day there occurred a similar scene, save only that it was, fortunately, not attended with

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

equally fatal results. Another dispute on the same contemptible question of precedence took place between the Prince of Tarente, son of the Duke de la Trémouille, and the Count de Rieux, son of the Duke d'Elbœuf. M. de Condé, who chanced to be present, favoured the pretensions of the Prince de Tarente, who was his near relative; and during the discussion which ensued, the Count de Rieux having made use of a gesture which M. de Condé construed into an affront, he returned it by a blow, which was instantly met by another. The Prince, who was without his sword, instantly seized that of the Baron de Migenne, who was standing near him, and M. de Rieux as promptly drew his own; when the Count de Rohan, apprehensive of the consequences, sprang between the combatants, ordering M. de Rieux instantly to withdraw; and he was forthwith committed to the Bastille by *Monsieur*. M. de Condé was not, however, to be so easily appeased; he insisted that he would have satisfaction for the insult to which he had been subjected; and it was with considerable difficulty that his friends could convince him that he had been the first aggressor; when, finally, aware that his courage could not under any circumstances be called in question, he consented to let the matter drop; but it, nevertheless, rankled deeply; and in the afternoon of the same day, he remarked to MADEMOISELLE that she saw a man who had been beaten for the first time in his life.

A similar circumstance had nearly occurred during the first war of the Fronde, and was only prevented by a witticism of the president Bellièvre. M. de Beaufort, experiencing some difficulty in the success of his projects

through the interference of the Duke d'Elbœuf, lost his temper; and seeking some method to attain his purpose, exclaimed passionately; "If I were to strike M. d'Elbœuf, do you not think that it would change the face of affairs?"

"No, Your Highness;" replied the president; "I think that it would only change the face of M. d'Elbœuf."[1]

After the spirited interference of the Count de Rohan related above, *Monsieur*, The Prince, and MADEMOISELLE, succeeded in obtaining from the parliament the registration of his claims to a duchy, which were not, however, accorded until after long deliberation; and thus the brave old family motto was negatived in its chivalry.

About this time M. de Valois, the only son of *Monsieur*, expired after a few weeks' illness; and the blow was a heavy one to the prince, who caused the body to be removed to the Calvary until its interment at St. Denis, for which he anticipated the royal authority immediately upon the receipt of his letters to the court announcing the event. He was not, however, destined to experience even this inadequate consolation; for the reply which he received to his communication was couched in the most harsh and unsympathizing terms, informing him that the death of his child was a visible judgment of God for the unjust war in which he was engaged; with several other comments quite as bitter, as insulting, and as ill-timed.

MADEMOISELLE was much affected by this death, although the child, being strangely deformed, would never have been able to maintain his rank with that dignity required by the fastidiousness of the court to which he

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

belonged. Her grief was, however, diverted by intelligence received by M. de Condé from Bordeaux, of the severe, and it was believed fatal, illness of The Princess his wife, who was prostrated by fever: and as MADEMOISELLE was about to express her regret in the courtly commonplace which she considered necessary to the occasion, she was interrupted by the Countess de Frontenac, who told her with a smile that she had learnt from M. de Chavigny that The Prince was already consoled, by the hope that she would herself accept his hand. Once more busy with the idea of marriage, the princess drove to the Tuileries, where she encountered M. de Condé himself, who immediately joined her, and they walked twice up and down the avenue together without exchanging a word, being apprehensive that they were observed.

At the same period, *Monsieur* sent for his daughter with considerable mystery, desiring her to wait upon him at the Luxembourg, with no other attendance than that of the two countesses (Mesdames de Fiesque et de Frontenac); and she hastened to obey, feeling convinced that news had arrived of the death of the Princess de Condé, and that His Royal Highness and The Prince were anxious to accomplish her marriage before any interference could be offered by the court. Once more, however, she was destined to disappointment; for the object of her hasty summons was simply to communicate to her the receipt of a letter from the Duke de Lorraine, who, in reply to the entreaties of *Monsieur* and The Prince that he should join them in Paris, had written to declare that he must abstain from so doing until he had obtained the pardon of MADEMOISELLE, whom he had offended; and receive her commands, as well as those of Madame de Frontenac,

to return to the capital. M. de Saint Etienne, who had been the bearer of the letter, also assured her that the duke could be induced to comply with the wishes of His Royal Highness upon no other terms; and, eventually, the princess was induced to write to M. de Lorraine, declaring that she forgave all that had occurred, in the hope that he would repair his fault; and that she should have great pleasure in seeing him. The countess also wrote; and the ladies were then permitted to retire, having accomplished a very different errand from that which they had anticipated.[1]

We have already stated that the king had issued an ordinance which transferred the parliament to Pontoise; to which they had replied, that they could not obey the royal command, nor even give it a public reading, so long as the Cardinal Mazarin remained in France; while they, moreover, put forth an ordinance of their own, by which every one of their members was forbidden to leave Paris; and all who were absent were enjoined to return there. The king immediately signified his acquiescence in their demand; while the minister tendered his resignation, which was accepted, and retired to Bouillon. No concession could have been either better judged, or better timed, although both parties at once felt it, to be a mere comedy. The attack upon the town-hall, in which several magistrates and near forty citizens lost their lives, had indisposed the parliament to the cause of the princes; while the nomination of *Monsieur* as Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom had been carried only by a majority of five voices, leaving an opposition of

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

sixty-nine members; and not only the provinces, but even the capital itself, were beginning to weary of a war, which, while it harassed, drained, and weakened the resources of the country, could be ultimately productive of no adequate result. The departure of Mazarin removed all pretext of discontent; for, his banishment once effected, parliamentary opposition degenerated into political rebellion; and the union of the princes became a matter of high treason, against both the sovereign and the state.

The declaration of the king which announced the departure of Mazarin, produced on its arrival at Paris all the effect which had been anticipated. *Monsieur* and The Prince proceeded to the meeting of parliament, and declared that the principal cause of their opposition no longer existing, they were ready to lay down their arms; provided that His Majesty should see fit to grant an amnesty, to remove the troops which were stationed in the environs of Paris, to withdraw those which were quartered in Guienne, and to give free passage and safeguards to the Spanish forces to return to their own country; as well as to accord permission to the princes themselves to send envoys to confer with His Majesty upon such points as might still require adjustment. While the parliament, on their side, issued a decree, by which it was ordained that His Majesty should be thanked for banishing the cardinal; and very humbly requested to return to his good city of Paris.

The negotiation proved a long one, for the princes desired guarantees, while the king stood firm, and refused to compromise his dignity. The princes stipulated that the past should be as though it had never

been, while the king maintained that there were certain things which it behoved him to keep in remembrance. The Cardinal de Retz was the representative of *Monsieur*, and M. de Chavigny that of The Prince. Neither of them, however, succeeded as they had hoped; *Monsieur* received only vague and evasive answers; and M. de Condé was equally unfortunate, and became the more intemperate under his annoyance from the fact of a severe indisposition obliging him to leave Paris. So great, indeed, was his irritation, that before his departure he threw himself into a violent passion with M. de Chavigny, whom he reproached with having neglected his interests, when the poor young nobleman became so alarmed as to fall ill, from which illness he died some days afterwards.

The reply of the king to the requisition of the princes was a refusal to grant the necessary passports to the Marshal d'Étampes, the Count de Fiesque, and M. de Goulas; while the answer to *Monsieur* individually, expressed that His Majesty was surprised the Duke d'Orleans should not have reflected, that after the departure of the cardinal there remained nothing more for him to do, than, in accordance with his word and declaration, to lay down his arms, to renounce all associations and treaties, and to withdraw the foreign troops from the kingdom; after he had done which, all those whom he sent to negotiate an arrangement with the court would be well received.

The Duke de Beaufort and M. de Broussel mutually proffered their resignation; the one as governor of Paris, and the other as provost of the merchants. They preferred a voluntary tender to an official destitution, as being at once more safe and less mortifying.

On the 17th of October the king arrived at St. Germain, where the civic guard and the town deputation hastened to greet him, and brought back with them in triumph the Marshal de l'Hôpital, and the Councillor Lefèvre, who returned to their former offices; announcing at the same time that in two days the king would make his entry into the capital.

On the 21st he accordingly did so, having slept the previous night at Ruel; whence he despatched two of his retinue to request *Monsieur* to meet him outside the gates, an invitation which was peremptorily declined; His Royal Highness preferring to remain shut up in the Luxembourg, where the acclamations of the populace were nevertheless distinctly audible. As they had shouted on the news of the victory of Rocroy; on the advent of M. de Condé, and on his subsequent banishment; on learning the precipitate flight of Mazarin from the capital, and on his re-appearance in triumph by the side of the young monarch; as they had shouted for MADEMOISELLE when she turned the cannon of the Bastille against their legitimate sovereign; so they once more pealed forth their rejoicings at the return of the boy-king whom they had shed both blood and money to deprive of his capital.

In the regulation of the ceremonial which was made at Ruel for the entrance into the city, it had been decided that the king should ride beside the queen's carriage, and be surrounded by the Swiss guards; but the young monarch objected to this arrangement, nor could all the arguments which were advanced in its favour induce him to adopt it. He would return to his capital, he said, as a sovereign should do, at the head of his army, and himself open the procession. As his will

could not be opposed, he consequently did so; and showed himself thus, amid the glare of ten thousand torches, to his so lately rebellious citizens, upon whom the boldness of the act produced an unhoped-for impression. There was more prudence in his precocious courage than in all the subtle diplomacy of his more experienced mother.

While she was still engaged at her evening toilette, MADEMOISELLE was waited on by the king's steward, M. de Sanguin, who informed her that he was the bearer of a letter from His Majesty, which he had been instructed to deliver into her own hands; and its contents signified that the king, being about to take up his abode in Paris, had no other residence to offer to his brother than the Tuileries, which he requested her to vacate on the following morning.

The princess merely replied that His Majesty should be obeyed; but that it was necessary she should communicate the order which she had received to His Royal Highness; and that if he returned in the afternoon she would have the honour of answering the letter of the king. She then proceeded to the Luxembourg, where she found *Monsieur* extremely uneasy and out of temper; who, on being informed of the purport of her visit, and consulted as to what should be done, told her that she had nothing to do but to obey. Finding that anything more definite or satisfactory was not to be extorted from her father in his present mood, the princess accordingly returned home, and summoned to her assistance the President Viole, and the parliamentary counsel, Croissy, with whom, on his departure, M. de Condé had entreated her to advise in every emergency; assuring her that they were two of his best friends, in whom he had unlimited

confidence. Viole, on his arrival, told her that it was reported *Monsieur* had an understanding with the court; and he even showed her the articles of the treaty; upon which she replied calmly, that the president must know His Royal Highness, and that she would not be answerable for any of his actions; adding, that she only wished to ascertain how she could serve M. de Condé, as that was the most essential consideration. M. de Viole was of opinion that she should take up her abode at the arsenal, which would not fail to annoy the court, and M. de Croissy agreed with the suggestion. The princess consequently looked upon the matter as decided; and in the evening mentioned it at the Luxembourg to *Monsieur*, who offered no objection.

On her return home, the princess found the Duchesses of Epernon and Châtillon awaiting her, and full of lamentation at her change of residence, which was at that period the most agreeable in Paris. Having exhausted their regrets, they at last inquired where she had decided to take up her abode. She replied, at the arsenal; upon which Madame de Châtillon exclaimed, that she could not conceive who had been so ill-advised as to propose such an arrangement; nothing being less expedient, or so useless to the interests of M. de Condé. MADEMOISELLE replied that she acted upon the advice of Messieurs Viole and Croissy; but this information, far from satisfying the duchess, only determined her to be frank. She therefore assured the princess that if she contemplated another opposition to the court, she would inevitably subject herself to great annoyance. That the time was past for demonstrations such as those which had been previously made; and that all MADEMOISELLE

now had to do, was to consider how she could withdraw herself with the best grace; finally declaring, that as her servant, she thought it her duty to inform Her Highness that *Monsieur* had reconciled himself with the court; and had asserted that as he could not answer for her conduct, he consequently abandoned her fortunes.

The princess, grateful for the confidence which Madame de Châtillon had placed in her, thanked her sincerely for her good faith; and desired M. de Préfontaine to see the President Viole and M. de Croissy, early in the morning, to tell them what she had learnt, and to solicit their advice; stating at the same time her own opinion, which was, that under the circumstances, she ought to make another arrangement. In this sentiment both her counsellors agreed; and it was then suggested by some of her friends that she should establish herself in the palace of Mazarin, a measure which would compel the court to offer her a handsome residence in order to induce her to vacate it; but to this neither the princess herself, nor *Monsieur* would give their consent; they had no ambition to seize the lion by the mane. The whole day was thus uselessly exhausted in seeking a residence which could not be found; and the heiress of a score of duchies, divers principalities, and almost unlimited wealth, found herself compelled to accept shelter for the night from the Countess de Fiesque, her attendant; which she did with somewhat ruffled temper, and still more uncasiness.

Despite the assertion made to MADEMOISELLE by Viole, no treaty had actually been concluded between *Monsieur* and the court. The good faith of the president was, however, perfect; and he had full authority for believing it to

have been completed. Such was, nevertheless, not the case, although the difficulty had not arisen with Gaston, who had proposed certain articles of arrangement which the king, or rather those about him, had definitely rejected; and in a few days, to his infinite astonishment and mortification, His Royal Highness received an order from His Majesty to retire from Paris. During the embarrassment of MADEMOISELLE, his own daughter, he had selfishly resolved not to offer her a temporary asylum in the Luxembourg, being aware of the strong feeling which existed against her in the court party, and being fearful of compromising himself by an act of paternal kindness; and now he found himself, in his turn, thrust across the threshold of the palace, and even beyond the gates of the capital.

Monsieur had no sooner received the royal command, than, without betraying its purport to any one, he hastened to the parliament, to assure them that he had entered into no treaty whatever with the court; and that he was resolved, rather than separate his interests from their own, to perish with them. Perfectly unaware of the strait in which the prince found himself at the moment, and which had wrung from him this unusual burst of generous enthusiasm, the meeting warmly thanked him for so flattering a demonstration of attachment; but His Royal Highness nevertheless returned to the Luxembourg in a very bad humour, which he was anxious to exhaust upon the first persons who afforded him a pretext for pouring forth upon them his "vial of wrath."

MADEMOISELLE proved to be the victim; for, having learnt the exile of her father, and being anxious to ascertain the truth of the rumour, she entered the cabinet of *Madame* only a few minutes after *Monsieur* himself.

We have already stated that Gaston felt no overweening affection for the daughter of his first marriage; and for this there were many causes, for although his egotism would have alone sufficed to produce such a result, it was rendered more pronounced by his jealousy, alike of her wealth and of her courage. His second family, which increased rapidly, were comparatively beggars, and he still had enough of the father about him to feel anxious for their future position; while he could not conceal from himself that on several occasions where he had played the craven, MADEMOISELLE had enacted the heroine; and however convenient such a fact had proved at the moment when it was needed, it was gall and wormwood to his after-reflections. No one could, consequently, have been more welcome to him than herself at the present crisis, for he could pour forth his bitterness in safety, and without risk of its subsequent consequences, upon one who owed him alike submission and respect. The first words to which the unlucky princess gave utterance sufficed therefore to draw down the avalanche of his ill-humour upon her, as she inquired if it were really true that His Royal Highness had received an order to withdraw from the capital? To which question he replied that he believed he was not called upon to account to her for his movements.

Startled, but not surprised, for she was aware of the infirmity of her father, MADEMOISELLE declared that she could not give credit to the rumour of his thus tamely abandoning the cause of M. de Condé and the Duke de Lorraine; a remonstrance which only met with a similar rejoinder to the first. MADEMOISELLE next requested to be informed if she were also to be banished; and this inquiry was still more bitterly answered. He said that

he should not interfere in anything that concerned her; for that she had conducted herself so ill towards the court, that he had ceased to feel any care for her interests, even as she had, on her side, rejected his advice.

MADEMOISELLE, calmly as she always met the ignoble temper of her father, could not suffer such an accusation as this to pass without comment; and she accordingly replied with great firmness, that, if His Royal Highness alluded to her conduct at Orleans, she begged to remind him that she had acted entirely by his order; and that although she could not produce written evidence of the fact, inasmuch as he had given her his commands by word of mouth, she still possessed several letters from His Royal Highness couched in terms of approbation beyond her deserts; and so full of affection and tenderness that they had not led her to anticipate his present reproaches.

Beaten at Orleans, *Monsieur*, to whom the subject was always a bitter one, retreated upon Paris; and asked her sarcastically, if she imagined that the affair at the Porte St. Antoine had tended to serve her at court? She had, he said, been delighted to play the heroine, and to be called such by her faction, as well as to be told that she had twice ensured its safety; and that now, whatever might be the result, she had only to console herself by the remembrance of the praises which had been lavished upon her.

To this taunt MADEMOISELLE responded by declaring that she had done him as good service at the barrier as at Orleans; that both in the one place and in the other she had acted by his authority, blameable as he now considered her; and that, were the opportunity to recur, she should not hesitate to do precisely as she had done,

considering that such would be her duty, as he had a right to command both her obedience and her services. She added, moreover, that if His Royal Highness were destined to be unfortunate, she considered it only proper that she should share his disgrace and his evil fortunes; and that she was better pleased to feel that she had not been useless in the past, than to see herself punished without cause. She knew nothing, she said, about her being a heroine; but she was aware that the privileges of her high birth entailed upon her the necessity of a noble and elevated line of conduct, which all were at liberty to designate as they pleased; but which she simply considered as pursuing her proper path, from not having been born in so mean a rank as to find herself compelled to adopt that of others.

After a time the ill-humour of *Monsieur* began to evaporate; when the princess again spoke of her difficulty in procuring a residence, and even so far conquered her pride as to entreat him to give her accommodation in the Luxembourg. He briefly answered that there was not room to receive her; upon which she remarked that no individual of his household had shown her the courtesy to offer her their apartments, although she believed that she had the greatest right to expect a home there;[1] but even this hint failed in its effect upon the obtuse prince, who satisfied himself by observing that all the present inhabitants of the palace were necessary to his comfort, and that he should not suffer one of them to be disturbed.

"In that case," said MADEMOISELLE resolutely; "I shall establish myself at the hôtel de Condé; it is empty; and I can there command ample accommodation."

[1] The Luxembourg Palace was the property of MADEMOISELLE.

So bold a resolution brought cold damps to the forehead of the quailing listener; and he had only power to utter a peremptory command that she should immediately abandon such an idea.

"Where then does Your Royal Highness wish me to go?" asked the poor princess.

"Where you please"—was the regal reply; and as *Monsieur* gave it utterance, he turned upon his heel, and left the room. Thus uncourteously dismissed, MADEMOISELLE returned to the hôtel de Fiesque; and it was at length determined that she should pass the night under the roof of Madame de Montmort, the sister of the countess, where she awaited with great anxiety the permission of His Royal Highness to reside under his protection. No such permission, however, reached her; but early on the following morning, having received a note from which she learnt that *Monsieur* had already started for Limours, she immediately despatched the Count de Holac, by whom he was overtaken near Berny.

The Duke d'Orleans had no sooner recognised his daughter's messenger than, leaving him no time to explain his errand, he exclaimed that he was glad to see him, in order that he might communicate his pleasure to MADEMOISELLE that she should retire to her estate of Bois-le-Vicomte; and cease to delude herself with the hopes held out to her by the Duke de Beaufort and Madame de Montbazon that she could in any way assist the views of M. de Condé, or repair his fortunes. She might learn, he said, that there was nothing more to be done, by the indifference with which the populace of Paris had suffered him personally to leave the capital, although he was so much better loved and more important than herself. She

had, therefore, only to withdraw herself from the city, and not to anticipate impossible events. M. de Holac ventured to remonstrate; and to observe that Her Royal Highness, aware of the route which he had taken, was already preparing to follow him. To this measure the prince, however, vehemently dissented; declaring that she must immediately proceed to Bois-le-Vicomte as he had already ordered, and as he once more repeated. The count respectfully, but firmly, again urged the utter impossibility of such a step, Bois-le-Vicomte being a solitary house, and surrounded in all directions by troops, who pillaged every place near which they passed; declaring that it would be out of their power even to procure necessary provisions; and that, moreover, MADEMOISELLE had generously converted the château into an hospital for those who had been wounded at the battle of the Porte St. Antoine; a circumstance which of course excluded her from its occupancy. The retort of *Monsieur* upon this announcement was, that if such were the case, she might retire to another of her estates, or live anywhere she pleased, provided it were not with him.

M. de Holac then suggested that the princess should take up her abode with *Madame*, who had remained in Paris, being too ill to venture upon a journey; but this proposition met with no more encouragement than the last; *Monsieur* asserting that such an arrangement was impossible, for that *Madame* was in weak health, and that MADEMOISELLE would inconvenience her; upon which the count replied, with a profound bow, that he considered it his duty to inform His Royal Highness that he apprehended all opposition would be useless, as the princess had resolved upon rejoining him.

"Let her do as she likes then;" said *Monsieur* doggedly; "but let her know at the same time that if she does come, I shall turn her out."

It was, of course, useless to attempt further expostulation, and the Count de Holac accordingly retired to report the ill success of his mission to MADEMOISELLE, who quitted Paris on the following day without having made any definite arrangement. She left the city in a carriage lent to her for the purpose by Madame de Montmort, drawn only by two horses, a few attendants in undress liveries, three femmes-de-chambre, and accompanied merely by the Countess de Frontenac; and with this limited retinue took up her temporary residence at Pons, in the house of Madame de Boutheilier, the mother of the unfortunate Chavigny.

On the very day of her departure the king published an amnesty, from which, however, were excluded the Dukes de Beaufort, de la Rochefoucauld, and de Rohan; six parliamentary councillors, the President Pérault, and all the followers of the house of Condé; while in his suite he had nevertheless brought Henry de Guise, the Archbishop of Rheims, lately a prisoner in Spain, who had been recalled a fortnight previously to France at the solicitation of The Prince.

Let us give a brief glance at the situation of the kingdom at this period.

The archduke had retaken Gravelines and Dunkirk: Cromwell, without any declaration of hostilities, had seized several French ships; Barcelona and Casal, the one the key of Spain, and the other that of Italy, were wrenched from the French crown; Champagne and Picardy had been ravaged by the passage of the troops

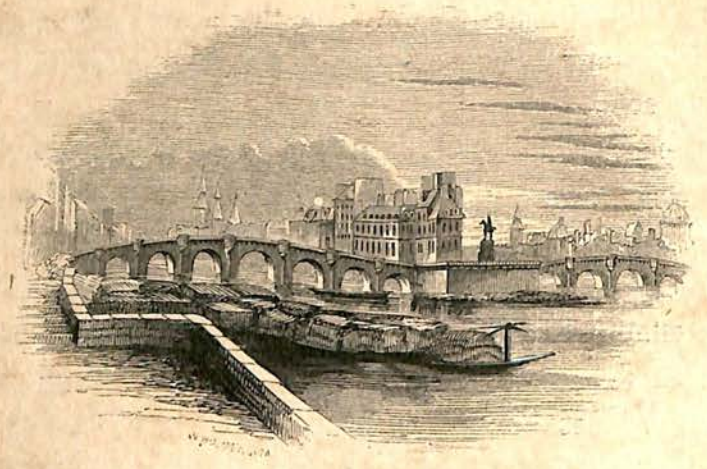
of Spain and Lorraine, whom the princes had summoned to their aid; Berry, Nivernais, Saintonge, Poitou, Perigord, Limousin, Anjou, Touraine, Orleanais, and Bauce, were ruined by the civil war; the standards of Spain had floated over the Pont Neuf, and flouted the proud statue of Henry IV; and, finally, the yellow scarfs of Lorraine had fluttered in the streets of Paris as freely as the blue and isabel, which were the distinguishing colours of the houses of Orleans and Condé. The Cardinal de Retz, who had remained neutral in all the recent movements, had hastened to congratulate the king and his illustrious mother on their return to the good city whence they had so long been banished; the Duke d'Orleans, having vainly proffered the most vehement professions of an unalterable fidelity for the future, had retired to Blois with the consent of the court. MADEMOISELLE, after having wandered right and left, hoped and despaired a thousand times, and maintained a correspondence with The Prince, which, of course, tended to produce no result, finally took up her abode upon one of her estates at Fargeau; the Duke de Beaufort, the Duchess de Montbazon, and Madame de Châtillon had left Paris; the Princess de Condé, the Prince de Conti, and the Duchess de Longueville remained at Bordeaux, no longer as the sovereign masters of the city, but as simple inhabitants; while the unfortunate Duke de la Rochefoucauld, as yet barely convalescent of the grievous wound which he had received at the Porte St. Antoine, had caused himself to be removed to Bagneux, nearly cured both of his fancy for faction and his passion for Madame de Longueville; and, finally, the Duke de Rohan, who was believed to be one of the most faithful followers of The Prince, and who

was under weighty obligations both to him and *Monsieur*, had arranged matters so cleverly, that a week after their entrance into Paris, Their Majesties stood sponsors to his infant son.[1]

Thus the court saw all their enemies dispersed and overcome, save one; but of that one the very name was formidable, although by the recent events, he found himself shorn of at least three-fourths of his strength. We allude, of course, to M. de Condé; of whose diminished influence the royal council were so well aware, that they did not hesitate to urge the king, in a Bed of Justice which he held on the 13th of the following month, to publish a declaration setting forth that the Princes de Condé and Conti, the Prince of Tarente, the Duchess de Longueville, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, and all their adherents, having rejected with contempt and perseverance the favours which had been offered to them, and, by these means, rendered themselves unworthy of all pardon, had irrevocably incurred the penalties declared against rebels, guilty of lèse-majesté, disturbers of the public peace, and traitors to their country.

The parliament registered this declaration without comment or hesitation; while M. de Condé and the Duke de Lorraine continued their military operations in the provinces with varying success, but succeeded under every circumstance in harassing the forces which were opposed to them.

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.



CHAPTER IV.

IMPRUDENCE OF THE COADJUTOR—THE COURT ARE ANXIOUS FOR HIS OVERTHROW—LOUIS XIV. ASSERTS HIMSELF—RESOLVES ON HIS ARREST—AUTOGRAPH ORDER TO THAT EFFECT—ARREST OF THE COADJUTOR—THE OPIATE-PASTE—TERMINATION OF THE SECOND FRONDE—RETURN OF MAZARIN—DEATHS OF THE DUKES DE BOUILLON, THE MARSHAL CAUMONT DE LA FORCE, AND MADEMOISELLE DE CHEVREUSE—MARRIAGE OF THE POET SCARRON AND FRANCES D'AUBIGNY—EARLY HISTORY OF FRANCES D'AUBIGNY.

On the occasion of the decree just named, the king sent M. de Saintot, the master of the ceremonies, to the Cardinal de Retz, to command his attendance at the meeting in which it was to be declared: to which summons the prelate replied that he most humbly begged permission of His Majesty to absent himself, as he conceived that it would neither be just nor courteous, when he was on friendly terms with M. de Condé, for him to vote in a deliberation in which it was question of his condemnation. Saintot had warned him of its having been suggested in the presence of the queen that he would avail himself of this pretext to refuse compliance with

the king's summons; and also that she had remarked the excuse was not valid, inasmuch as M. de Guise, who owed his liberty to the solicitation of The Prince, would be present; upon which M. de Retz retorted that, had he been of the same profession as the Archbishop of Rheims, he should have been delighted to emulate the noble feats which that prince had lately accomplished in Naples.

This rejoinder exasperated the queen; and her anger was heightened by the comments of those about her, who declared that it was a convincing proof of his anxiety for M. de Condé's interests; and what he thus simply decided upon principle, assumed in her mind the indication of measures inimical to the court either already taken, or about to be attempted.[1]

Anxious, thenceforward, to be freed from an enemy whose popularity rendered him doubly dangerous, the court offered to M. de Retz the direction of their affairs in Rome for the space of three years, the liquidation of all his debts, and an ample income to enable him to make a brilliant figure in the capital of the christian world; but, conscious that their motive, so far from being a desire to forward his interests, was only to effect his removal from the capital, he resolved to treat the proposal accordingly, and stipulated for certain conditions before he would consent to abandon his see; all of which were for the purpose of enriching his friends rather than himself; but were not, on that account, the less impolitic or exorbitant.

From that moment the council resolved to rid themselves of him in a more summary and authoritative manner; and the young king, who had begun to

[1] Mémoires du Cardinal de Retz.

assert himself, gave such evident tokens of his distaste to the exacting and self-appreciating prelate, that his friends warned him to beware of the young but nervous will of the stripling-monarch, which he might find it difficult to oppose. M. de Retz, however, smiled at the caution; and when the president Bellièvre, among others, was expressing some apprehension of the kind, he answered calmly, that he had two oars which would prevent the capsizing of his bark; one was his cardinal's mace, and the other was the crosier of Paris.[1] The princess-palatine, who had made her peace with the court, without, however, withdrawing her friendship from the prelate, endeavoured in her turn to convince him that he was tempting his fate, assuring him that it had been resolved to remove him, even at the sacrifice of his life; but although he thanked her for the interest which she exhibited in his welfare, he nevertheless persisted in remaining quietly in Paris, although he consented not to risk himself at the Louvre.

As it was soon ascertained that he had come to this decision, it was determined to arrest him wherever he might be met with; and Pradelle, a captain of the royal guards, received a written order to that effect; while upon his suggestion that the cardinal would never suffer himself to be taken without offering resistance; and that, in order to secure his seizure, he might in consequence be compelled to take his life, which he could not consent to do without sufficient authority; the king seized a pen, and wrote with his own hand at the bottom of the order:—

"I have commanded Pradelle to execute the present

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

order on the person of the Cardinal de Retz, and even to arrest him, dead or alive, in the event of resistance on his part. "LOUIS."

Divers measures were immediately taken to secure the capture of the obnoxious prelate. Spies were set upon his residence, efforts were made to bribe his servants to betray his movements, and no pains were spared to secure the execution of the arrest. While these things were taking place, M. de Retz was betrayed by his vanity into a folly well calculated to embitter still more the virulence of his enemies. M. de Brissac having upon one occasion asked him if it were not his intention to ride the following day to Rambouillet, and receiving an affirmative reply, drew a paper from his pocket, and requested him to glance at its contents. It was an anonymous note, addressed to himself, begging him to caution the cardinal against the proposed journey, and asserting that the consequences of such a step would be fatal. M. de Retz was not, however, to be turned from his purpose; but he took the precaution to be accompanied by two hundred gentlemen, with whom he gaily set forth for Rambouillet. He states that he found there numerous officers of the guards, and does not know if their intention were to attack him, as he was not in a position to be attacked; but that they saluted him most reverentially, and that he entered into conversation with those with whom he was acquainted, and afterwards returned home as quietly as though he had not committed a folly.

He still, however, remained self-exiled from the court, until he was reproached by Madame de Lesdiguières, his cousin, (who was a favourite of the queen, and greatly in her confidence, and in whose perfect good faith he him-

self placed the utmost confidence;) with his persistence in a line of conduct which she declared would inevitably draw upon him a disgrace that he should be most anxious to avert; and who strongly advised him to make his appearance at the Louvre, which he might do in all security.

M. de Retz admitted the propriety of this measure, but demurred as to its safety; whereupon she inquired if that were the only consideration which deterred him; and he frankly confessed that it was. In that case, she said, she trusted that he would go to the palace the next day, as she knew that a secret council had been held, at which, after great opposition, it was resolved that a reconciliation should be effected with him, and that he should even receive what he had demanded for his friends. M. de Retz admits, although the result of his compliance with this dangerous advice proved so unfortunate, that he never entertained the slightest suspicion that he was wilfully deceived by Madame de Lesdiguières, whom he believed to have been misled by the Marshal de Villeroi. Be that as it may, however, it is certain that on the morrow when he entered the queen's antechamber, he was arrested by M. de Villequier, who was the captain of the guard on duty. He was then conducted through the great gallery of the Louvre; and having descended by the pavilion of MADEMOISELLE, found one of the royal carriages awaiting him, into which M. de Villequier and five or six officers of the body-guard entered along with him. The escort was composed of the Marshal d'Albert at the head of the gendarmes; M. de Vaugauion at the head of the light horse, and M. de Venne, lieutenant-colonel of the guards, in command of eight companies of his corps. In order to reach the Porte St. Antoine, the

prisoner was compelled to pass two or three other barriers, at each of which was posted a battalion of Swiss, with their arms levelled towards the town; and finally, between eight and nine in the evening, he found himself at Vincennes, where he was ushered into a spacious and dreary apartment, without either hangings or bed; and he remained for a fortnight, in the middle of December, without fire.[1]

This arrest produced a great sensation; although the populace, worn out by such constantly succeeding catastrophes, contented itself by weeping over the fate of their beloved archbishop, instead of attempting his rescue. His friends were, however, less passive; and, dreading that in order to disembarrass themselves of him quietly, the court might seek to dispose of him by poison, they held a council to devise some method of conveying an antidote to his prison. Madame de Lesdiguières, who looked upon herself with reason as the primary cause of his arrest, undertook to effect this; and Villequier, who had conducted him to Vincennes, being her devoted friend, she requested him to take charge of a jar containing an opiate-paste, and to give it from her to the cardinal. Villequier consented; but as he was about to execute the commission, he suddenly deemed it expedient to secure the permission of the queen; who had no sooner learnt the circumstance than she desired that the jar might be brought to her; and having caused its contents to be analyzed by a chemist, thus learned their nature. Extremely indignant at the suspicion implied by such a precaution, she immediately communicated the circumstance to the

[1] Mémoires du Cardinal de Retz.

ministers; upon which one of them proposed that an actual poison should be substituted for the antidote; but M. Letellier formally refused to recognise such a proceeding, and the council ultimately contented themselves with retaining the jar and its contents.[1]

The arrest of M. de Retz terminated the second war of the Fronde; and Mazarin only awaited its acomplishment to return to Paris. Let it not be imagined, however, that he prepared to do so quietly; and to be permitted to regain the capital on sufferance. He was too able a tactician to forget that the French were an impulsive people —that their watchword was "glory"—and he had consequently been smoothing his backward path by effecting a succession of petty conquests over the forces of M. de Condé and his allies; to which end he left St. Dizier two days previously to the imprisonment of M. de Retz, and joined the troops then besieging Bar-le-Duc, who ultimately retook the town. After Bar-le-Duc, Ligny surrendered; and then the cardinal, in order that his re-appearance might be heralded by victory, endeavoured to regain St. Menehould and Rethel; the severe cold, however, prevented this; and he was compelled to content himself with the capture of Château-Porcian, and Vervins, whence the Spaniards retreated under the Count de Fuensaldagne, without attempting any resistance. After these exploits, Mazarin knew enough of the mutable materials of a Parisian mob to feel that he might return, not only in all safety, but also in all honour, to the Louvre; and in fact the king drove three leagues beyond the walls to welcome him; while even

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

this demonstration, flattering as it was, did not satisfy the courtiers, who rode forward as far as Daumartin.

The cardinal-minister entered the gates of Paris in triumph, seated beside his sovereign and pupil; bonfires blazed and fireworks were exhibited in his honour; and amid all these rejoicings there were but few in the capital that night who thought upon their "shivered idols"—M. de Condé, the Duke de Beaufort, and the Cardinal de Retz.

During the year 1652, which we have now traced to its close, the most note-worthy deaths were those of the Duke de Bouillon, who having deserted the Fronde to become the friend of Mazarin, did not live to reap the reward of his apostasy; the veteran Marshal Caumont de la Force,[1] who had escaped almost by a miracle at the massacre of St. Bartholomew; and the beautiful Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, who was carried off by fever in four and twenty hours, a short time previously to the disgrace of M. de Retz.

[1] James Nompar de Caumont, Duke de la Force, whose family could be traced back to the 11th century, was the son of Francis, Lord of La Force, who was killed during the massacre of St. Bartholomew. He bore arms in the Protestant army of Henry IV, and placed himself at the head of the reformers under Louis XIII. He gave in his submission to that king in 1622, and was created Marshal of France, and lieutenant-general of the forces in Piedmont. He took Pignerol; defeated the Spaniards at Carignan in 1630; passed over into Germany, where he took possession of several towns; and finally died as we have stated, in 1652. He was the grandfather of Charlotte Rose de Caumont de la Force, born in 1650, who devoted her life to the cultivation of literature, and obtained a place among the historians of the 17th century. She died in 1724, leaving behind her the *Secret History of Burgundy*, the *History of Marguerite de Valois*, *The Fairies*, the *Tale of Tales*, the *Castle in Spain*, *Gustavus Vasa*, &c.

In this year also a marriage was contracted, which, although regarded at the time as a mere jest for the wits of the court, was destined to influence in a powerful manner the close of the brilliant reign which we are now recording. It was in 1652 that the poet Scarron[1] married Frances d'Aubigny, the grand-daughter of the celebrated Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigny, who, at the age of six years, read the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages; and at that of thirteen embraced the military profession; fought under the Prince de Condé, and afterwards accepted service with Henry of Navarre, (subsequently Henry IV,) whose friend and confidant he became; and who appointed him successively a gentleman of the chamber, a general of brigade, and ultimately Vice-admiral of Guyenne and Brittany. He was the author of several works; and among others, of an Universal History, from 1550 (the year of his birth) to 1601. The father of Frances was Constant d'Aubigny, Baron de Surimeau; who having, without the consent of his parent, married Anne Marchand, the widow of John Courant, Baron

[1] Paul Scarron was the son of a councillor to the parliament, and was born in Paris in 1610 or 1611. He assumed the ecclesiastical habit, but without entering into any religious order; and was devoted to all the pleasures of his age, when a deplorable accident suddenly deprived him, at the age of twenty-seven, of the use of his limbs. Confined by his sufferings to an easy chair, he nevertheless preserved throughout all his privations his brilliant, lively, and sarcastic wit; and his sick chamber became the rendezvous of the most distinguished men of all ranks. He was the originator of burlesque poetry. His principal productions were the *Enéide Travestie, Typhon, or la Gigantomachie;* and several comedies, such as *Don Japhet of Armenia,* and the *Absurd Heir;* but his most celebrated work was the *Comic Novel,* in prose. All these writings were distinguished by perpetual sallies of wit and whimsicality; and breathe the most exuberant gaiety.

de Chatellaillon, and surprised her in an act of infidelity, murdered both her and her lover; and took as his second wife Jane de Cardillac, daughter of the governor of Château-Trompette, who bore him a son, and subsequently Frances, the celebrated Madame de Maintenon.

Bussy-Robutin, who, notwithstanding his vanity and self-appreciation, never could overcome his jealousy of those who achieved their own fortunes, or who had "greatness thrust upon them," indulges in his most popular work in some scandalous anecdotes of the early years of this lady, with which we have no intention to sully our pages, and to which we only advert from a principle of duty as faithful historians; neither shall we precisely follow the narrative which Madame de Maintenon has herself given in her Memoirs of her girlish recollections; for, correct as they may be in their general outline, it is easy to discover that they are recorded with considerable reservation; and that a doubtful light is thrown over many circumstances, from which time, and the evidence of her contemporaries, have removed the varnish of self-love.

Frances d'Aubigny was born on the 27th of November, 1635, in the prison of Niort,[1] where her father, who had rendered himself amenable to justice, was incarcerated. Her mother, who was at once amiable and high spirited, was, as we have already stated, the daughter of the governor of the Château-Trompette, in which the noble prisoner was expiating the crime of murder; and unable to resist the

[1] Niort is a handsome city, situated 108 leagues from Paris, and is the capital of the department of the Deux-Sevres. Its château has been converted into a prison; and the ancient palace of Eleonora of Aquitain now serves as its town-hall.

fascination of his manners, and, moreover, convinced by the arguments which he advanced in extenuation of his delinquency, she was at length induced to credit his assertion that he valued life only for her sake, and desired his liberty solely that he might devote it to her happiness; and thus consented to effect his escape, and to fly with him, provided he would pledge himself to make her his wife at the earliest opportunity. To this he readily agreed; and through her means his evasion was effected, and his pledge soon afterwards fulfilled.

The money which Madame d'Aubigny was enabled to raise upon her jewels sufficed for a time to their mutual support; but she had scarcely become the mother of a son, when Monsieur d'Aubigny found that they were utterly without the means of existence; and unable to support the sight of his heroic wife and his infant boy deprived even of the most common necessaries of life, he resolved to risk a return to France; and to endeavour to save some remnant of his former wealth, upon which, with strict economy, they might contrive to exist. As he was thoroughly aware of the hazardous nature of the attempt, he left his wife without communicating his project, which he only confided to her by letter at the close of his first day's journey. The terror of the devoted lady was intense, for she idolized the man for whom she suffered; and her alarm was only too well founded. M. d'Aubigny was recognised, seized, and once more conveyed as a prisoner to the castle of Niort. The agonized wife at once felt that a second evasion was impossible: but her love and her conscience alike showed her, that if she could not once more effect his liberty, she could at least share and lighten his captivity; and she according set

forth in weak health, and with a burdened heart, to become the partner of his prison.

The family of M. d'Aubigny, revolted alike by his previous crime, and by his second marriage, had all abandoned him, save his sister, Madame de Villette; and the birth of a second child having taken place in the gloomy gaol to which his errors had consigned him, this lady hastened to offer the consolation of her presence to the unhappy pair. The condition in which she found them was deplorable; poverty and destitution met her on all sides; and to so extreme a state of misery were they reduced, that Madame d'Aubigny, whom anxiety and deprivation had reduced to a degree of weakness which rendered her unable to afford nourishment to her infant of two days old, was anticipating every hour that she should see it expire in her arms; while crouched at her feet lay her first-born, her boy, literally wrapped in rags, and already old enough to be conscious of his misery.

Madame de Villette, unable to endure so painful a spectacle, after having afforded to her brother and his wretched wife every assistance in her power, took possession of the suffering child, and carried it home with her to the Château de Murcey, where it passed its infancy; but at the close of that period, the prisoner having obtained permission to return to the Château-Trompette, he hastened to reclaim his daughter.

In 1639 his imprisonment concluded; but as he would not abjure Calvinism, Richelieu refused to allow him to remain in France, and he consequently embarked for Martinique. During the passage Frances was taken seriously ill, and the sickness made such rapid progress that in the short space of a few hours she was

declared to have expired; when one of the crew of the vessel, anxious, as sailors proverbially show themselves, to rid the ship of a dead body, lifted the child in his arms in order to throw her overboard; upon which the wretched mother implored the privilege of one more parting embrace, and, as she strained the infant to her heart, felt a slight movement, which convinced her that the hapless girl still lived. In this conviction she was strengthened by the observation of every succeeding moment; and ultimately her maternal tenderness recalled the fleeting faculties of the predestined Frances. Thenceforward, M. d'Aubigny devoted himself entirely to the education of his children; while Madame d'Aubigny, with the strong good sense and resolution which had characterized all her married life, exerted herself so strenuously in the management of the slender funds which they had been enabled to secure on their departure, that prosperity once more dawned upon the exiled family. Rendered sanguine by this success, her husband conceived the unfortunate idea of sending her back to France, to recover, should it be possible, some portion of his sequestered estates; and she obeyed him, as she had ever done, with cheerful alacrity; but during her absence, M. d'Aubigny, anxious to force fortune, was induced to gamble; and when she returned, unsuccessful, to report the inutility of her voyage, she found him once more a ruined man.

Overwhelmed by poverty, regret, and hopelessness, Constant d'Aubigny, in 1645, sank into a foreign and ignoble grave; and in such an utter state of destitution did he leave his widow, that when she resolved upon returning to Europe, she was compelled to resign her daughter as a pledge into the hands of her principal creditor; who, however, becoming weary of supporting the

poor child without any probable prospect of remuneration, embarked her on board a French vessel, without even intimating his intention to Madame d'Aubigny; who learnt her arrival at La Rochelle, while she believed her to be still in Martinique. As her poverty had experienced no diminution, the unhappy lady reluctantly acceded to the proposal of Madame de Villette, that her daughter should once more become her inmate; for, like her brother, she was a Calvinist, and the mother trembled lest the aunt should tamper with the religion of her child; nor were her fears groundless, as in a short time Frances adopted the creed of her protectors.

She had been baptized by a Romanist priest; and her sponsors were the Duke Francis de la Rochefoucauld, and Frances Tirequeau Countess de Neuillant, who was attached to the household of Anne of Austria, and who no sooner learnt the apostasy of her god-child, than she obtained an order to remove her from the house of her relative, and to assume her guardianship. This accomplished, every effort was made to induce the young Calvinist to return to her original faith; but neither threats, exhortations, nor menaces, had power to shake her principles; and thus she who was one day to cause the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, began life as the martyr of that religion of which she was destined subsequently to become the scourge.[1]

The youth of the after-queen was cruel. At three years of age, she crossed the Atlantic with her parents, who knew not how soon they might want bread; and at eleven, she returned to France alone, and surrounded by

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

strangers, only to find herself, after a brief interval of ease and affection, still more unhappy and more persecuted than ever; for when Madame de Neuillant found her invulnerable to persuasion, and firm in the new faith which she had adopted, there was no species of humiliation to which she did not expose her. The most petty cares of the household devolved upon the young Frances; she measured out the oats for the horses; summoned the servants when their services were required, bells being at that period unknown; and, as the countess was hyper-economical in all that regarded her establishment, frequently suffered both from cold and hunger. At length her mother, who could no longer endure the sight of her despondency, reclaimed her in her turn; and placed her in the Ursuline convent at Niort. But, when there, neither Madame de Neuillant whom she had quitted, nor Madame de Villette who dreaded her relapse to Romanism, would consent to pay her board; and, finally, conquered by necessity, after having received the assurance of the confessor that, despite her heresy, her aunt to whom she was fondly attached, might still be saved, she once more embraced the Catholic faith.

The Ursuline nuns, proud of the conversion which had been accomplished under their roof, kept her in the community for another year; but, finding that her friends still remained inexorable, they declined any longer to afford her shelter; and she returned to share the poverty of her heart-broken mother only in time to see her die a death of misery and despair. For three months after this fatal event the helpless orphan remained shut up in the squalid apartment in which she had thus been left destitute, without an effort or a wish to survive her lost parent;

indebted to the charity of her neighbours for the pittance of bread by which she was kept alive; and without a care or a thought for the future. Her extreme destitution at length touched the heart of Madame de Neuillant, who placed her once more with the Ursulines; but on her departure for Paris removed her to her own house in the same subordinate position as before.

Among the friends of the countess was the Marquis de Villarceaux; who was struck by the beauty of the desolate girl, of whom he in vain endeavoured to make his mistress; for, oppressed as she was, Frances d'Aubigny was too right-minded to encourage the addresses of a libertine. Nor was the profligate Marquis the only person attracted by her loveliness; for the Chevalier de Méré, who enjoyed the reputation of being a man of intellect and taste, having first paid homage to her personal charms, soon learned to appreciate the intelligence from which they derived their greatest fascination; and becoming attached, with all the anxious tenderness of a brother to the handsome Creole, took considerable pains to form her manners, and to enable her hereafter to appear advantageously in society. Grateful as she was, however, for all the interest which the chevalier evinced in her fate, the young girl only shook her head with a sad smile, when he ventured upon some flattering prophecy of her future existence; declaring that all she desired in this world was to meet with some good Christian, who would be charitable enough to pay the required dowry for her entrance into a convent.

The poet Scarron inhabited the same street as Madame de Neuillant; and, poor as he was, occasionally indulged in some of those good deeds which are so frequently

neglected, and even ridiculed by the wealthy; a fact so well known to M. de Méré, that he seized an opportunity of mentioning to him the position and wishes of his *protégée;* a tale which so deeply interested the infirm invalid, that he eagerly promised to procure contributions from his friends, and to supply any deficiency from his own purse, to enable the orphan to effect her purpose. Delighted by his success, the chevalier hastened to communicate these good tidings to the persecuted girl; who, in the joy of her heart, hurried to the residence of Scarron to pour forth her gratitude; a step which was destined to change the whole current of her fate.

Mademoiselle d'Aubigny, when she entered the apartment of Scarron, was conscious only of the weighty obligation which his ready sympathy had entailed upon her, and paid little attention to his grotesque and somewhat revolting appearance. Her first impulse was to rush towards him, and to raise his hand to her lips; and several minutes had elapsed, ere she had time to discover that she stood beside a man, who, although still young, was contorted in the most extraordinary manner. His limbs were wasted and feeble, his large eyes buried deeply in his head, his teeth black and irregular, and his expression, save when illumined by a flash of that joyous intellect which was, however, the light in which he lived, languid and suffering. No man, perhaps, ever endured more sharp physical suffering than Scarron, with so resolute a mental defiance as he exhibited.

A moment sufficed to betray all this to the rapid eye of the tearful orphan, but those very tears blinded

her to the most salient points of the picture. She saw Scarron, it is true; Scarron the cripple—Scarron the paralytic—Scarron the buffoon,—but to her he was a benefactor, a friend, a deliverer; and she could more readily have wept over his affliction, than smiled at the eccentricity of his appearance.

Meanwhile the dark and deep-set eyes of Scarron were not idle. With the cynicism of the period, he had no sooner heard of a "vocation," than he believed that the girl of fifteen by whom it was announced, must have felt a conviction that her appearance was not calculated to assist her progress in the world; instead of which he saw before him a face beaming with expression, and a figure fashioned in the most exact symmetry which a sculptor might have desired in a model. Thus impressed, a cheerful smile diffused itself over his countenance, as he declared that, upon mature reflection, he recalled his promise, and could not undertake to procure the means for her admission into a religious community.

The disappointed girl uttered a cry of grief.

"Listen to me;" said Scarron; "you are not fitted for a nun. You cannot understand the extent of the sacrifice which you are so eager to make. Will you become my wife? My servants anger and neglect me, and I am unable to enforce obedience; were they under the control of a mistress they would do their duty. My friends neglect me, and I cannot pursue them to reproach them with their abandonment; if they saw a pretty woman at the head of my household, they would make my home cheerful. I give you a week to decide."

This extraordinary wooing prospered; cripple as he was, Scarron was popular and witty; the first shock of his appearance had been softened by the circumstances under which they met; and at the close of the given period, Frances d'Aubigny consented to become his wife.

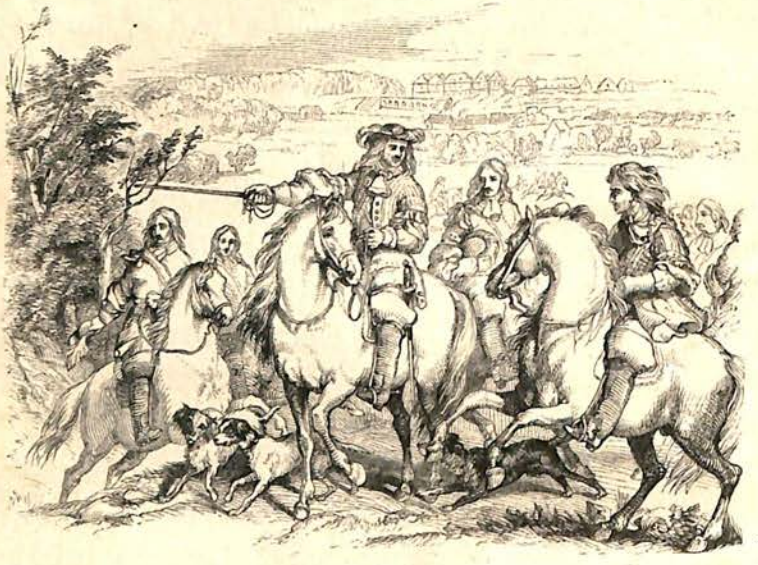
Scarron had not deceived himself. His bride had no sooner assumed the government of his house than his servants returned to their duty, and his friends to their allegiance; his saloon became the centre of all that was witty and intellectual in the capital; and, at the period of which we write, it was the fashion to appear in his circle. Nevertheless, great difficulties remained to be overcome. The war of the Fronde had afforded too rich and too tempting scope for the wit of Scarron, to enable him to remain in the neutrality which was dictated by prudence; and a considerable number of the satires which had appeared against Mazarin were traced to the caustic pen of the infirm poet. This fact was, moreover, the more natural, from the circumstance that the pension which Anne of Austria had conferred upon Scarron in consequence of his infirmities, had been suppressed by the minister, who became thenceforward the victim of his satire.

The position of the poet on the triumphant return of the cardinal was, consequently, worse than precarious; and Madame Scarron, after having succeeded in rendering his home happy, found herself under the necessity of undertaking the still more difficult task of ensuring a continuance of the comfort which she had already shed over it. Hers, however, was not a spirit to quail under such a task; and she forthwith commenced the undertaking of

reconciling her husband to the court, with an energy which was only equalled by her good sense. She had united herself with a being, amiable, it is true, but helpless, incautious, and improvident; who perilled his future existence recklessly on a *bon mot*, and could not be made to comprehend the extent of his imprudence; but the reputation of both her virtue and her beauty had already made her powerful friends, among whom the most attached were Ninon de l'Euclos, and Madame de Sévigné—the two extremes of moral society—the courtezan and the prude; one of whom valued her for her intellect, and the other for her reputation.

The numerous applications which she was constrained to make, opened to Madame Scarron all the doors in Paris; and her anxiety to prevent the banishment of her husband, developed all the resources of her mind, and all the charms of her eloquence. She was ultimately successful. The political offences of the poet were forgiven in consideration of his infirmities; and his house became more frequented and more popular than ever.[1]

[1] Louis XIV. et son Siècle.



CHAPTER V.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE PRINCE DE CONDÉ — POSITION OF MAZARIN — HIS FIRST MEASURES—MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCE DE CONTI AND MADEMOISELLE MARTINOZZI —CONDEMNATION OF THE PRINCE DE CONDÉ—HIS RETORT—MARRIAGE OF THE DUKE DE RICHELIEU AND MADEMOISELLE DE BEAUVAIS—FIRST ATTACHMENTS OF LOUIS XIV.—MADAME DE FRONTENAC AND MADAME DE CHÂTILLON—CAUTION OF THE CARDINAL—MADEMOISELLE D'HEUDECOURT—THE NIECES OF THE CARDINAL—MADAME DE BEAUVAIS—COURT FESTIVITIES—THE ÉTOURDI OF MOLIÈRE—LOUIS XIV. AN ACTOR AND A DANCER—THE SUPERINTENDENT FOUQUET—THE CORONATION OF LOUIS XIV.—THE MARQUIS DE FABERT—THE COADJUTOR BECOMES ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS—M. DE BELLIÈVRE AS AN AMBASSADOR—TRANSFER OF THE ARCHBISHOP TO NANTES—HIS EVASION—ORDER FOR HIS ARREST.

AFTER this long but necessary digression, we hasten to give a brief glance at the position of France at the commencement of the year 1653. M. de Condé, instead of retiring from Paris, might have made his peace advantageously with the court, who would readily have availed themselves of any pretext to terminate a war by which

they were at once harassed and impoverished; but after having opposed Turenne, and established his reputation as a soldier, as well as played the politician, and seen himself the idol of the populace, he determined to enact the partisan; and so withdrew from the capital like a knight of ancient chivalry; girt on his sword, mounted his charger, rallied around him all those who were attached to his fortunes, caused himself to be appointed generalissimo of the Spanish forces, and set forth, taking on his way the towns which Mazarin afterwards reconquered; until, compelled to retreat before Turenne, he ultimately crossed the French frontier.

The first care of the cardinal after his final return to Paris, was given to the state of the public finances, which were in a deplorable condition; and to his own, which had also suffered considerably by recent events. All was tranquil in the capital; and having exerted himself strenuously in the re-establishment of his private fortunes, Mazarin found his position sufficiently stable to enable him to turn his attention to the advancement of his family. He gathered his relations about him accordingly; and felt the greater confidence in so doing that the court had become shorn of its greatest ornaments by the result of the war.

The Duke d'Orleans still resided at Blois in a position of honourable banishment, where he held a court twice a week. MADEMOISELLE, when she withdrew to St. Fargeau, carried with her in her train all her personal friends and ladies of honour; M. de Condé had swept away not only his brilliant staff, but also the ladies who were attached to his party; the four Duchesses, de

Châtillon, de Beaufort, de Rohan, and de Montbazon, had left Paris; all the friends of the Cardinal de Retz were exiled; the Duke de Montausier[1] and his wife were in Guienne; the Duke de la Rochefoucauld still convalescent at Dampvilliers; the Princess de Condé and the Duchess de Longueville at Bordeaux; Madame de Chevreuse remarried; in short, all the most celebrated nobles and beauties scattered far and wide; and an ample field left vacant for the handsome nieces of the far-sighted cardinal.

Nor had Mazarin great cause for apprehension from without. Condé had taken refuge in the Low Countries; and the one cloud upon the horizon of the cardinal consequently lowered in that direction; but, ere long, The Princess and her son left Bordeaux to join The Prince, as if conscious that all further anticipation of successful resistance was at an end; the Cardinal de Retz was a fast prisoner; and Madame de Longueville, following the example of her sister-in-law, had also vacated the scene of her former triumph, and retired to the convent of St. Mary at Moulin, of which one of her relatives was the abbess; while no great time elapsed ere the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, thoroughly sated with faction, and the evil chances of civil war, began to make overtures of reconciliation to

[1] Charles du St. Maure, Duke de Montausier, Peer of France, Knight of the Orders of the King, was the descendant of a family of Touraine, and early distinguished himself by his valour and high character. During the civil wars of the Fronde he was Governor of Saintonge and Angoumois, both of which he maintained in their allegiance. His austere probity caused him to be selected to preside over the education of Louis, the Dauphin of France. He died in 1690, leaving by his wife, Julia Lucy d'Angennes, an only daughter, who married the Duke d'Uzès.

the court; being desirous to effect the marriage of his son, the Prince de Marsillac, with Mademoiselle de la Roche-Guyon, the heiress of the house of Duplessis-Liancourt.

In order to effect his purpose, the duke sent Gourville,[1] his confidential agent at Brussels, to ask the consent of the Prince de Condé to this marriage; but as Gourville had made himself conspicuous during the Fronde, and had, moreover, recently taken prisoner the director of the posts, who only regained his liberty by paying a ransom of forty thousand crowns, the cardinal-minister never lost sight of his movements; and having ascertained that he was for the moment in Paris, instantly resolved that he should not again leave it.

Gourville was not long ere he ascertained that his arrival had been detected, and, without an instant's hesitation, he resolved to brave the danger to which he was exposed, by requesting an audience of Mazarin; and, accordingly, to the surprise of the minister, who had just issued an order for his capture, he found himself about to be confronted, not with a prisoner, but with an envoy. Delighted by such a display of courageous presence of mind, the cardinal at once accorded the interview which Gourville had solicited; and, ere it terminated, so justly appreciated the moral qualities of the clever and fearless agent, that he

[1] John Héraud de Gourville was born in Larochefoucauld in 1625. The Duke de la Rochefoucauld having discovered him to be a man of intelligence, made him his valet-de-chambre, and afterwards his confidential friend. Involved in the disgrace of Fouquet, with whom he was on terms of intimacy, he travelled for some time abroad. He was afterwards the king's envoy in Germany; and was ultimately proposed as the successor of Colbert in the ministry. He died at Paris in 1703; and left behind him Memoirs from the year 1642 to that of 1698.

made proposals to him, which were accepted; and while he attached to his own service the intellect and adroitness which had elicited his admiration, Gourville effected the reconciliation of the duke with the court, which entailed the entire pacification of Guienne; and by his intermediation, a peace was definitely concluded between Mazarin and the city of Bordeaux.[1]

This great object accomplished, the cardinal resolved to strengthen and sustain the position which he had again acquired, by marrying his nieces to the most influential personages of the court; and, accordingly, profiting by a new misunderstanding which had arisen between the Prince de Conti and his brother, he determined to profit by so favourable an opportunity to attach the former to his own interests; and for this purpose he gained over a confidential friend of M. de Conti, to whom he promised the sum of twenty-five thousand livres, should he succeed in effecting a marriage between the prince and one of his nieces. The moment was, as the wily minister had seen, well chosen; for, at once jealous and indignant, M. de Conti received the proposition without repugnance, only stipulating that he should be free to select whichever of the ladies he might prefer; and this point having been conceded, to the great mortification of Mazarin the prince fixed upon Anna-Maria Martinozzi, who was all but affianced to the Duke de Candale; who, on his side, had been reluctantly led to contemplate the alliance of which he was still, under one pretext or another, deferring the completion, when he was startled to find his offered bride freely selected by a prince of the blood.

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

It will readily be believed that the transfer which was made of her hand was by no means accordant with the taste of the lady; the Duke de Candale being one of the finest men at court, and so celebrated for the elegance of his attire that he formed a model for those who were desirous to be distinguished for fashion and good taste. "The duke," says Bussy-Rabutin, "had large blue eyes, somewhat irregular features, a wide mouth, but garnished with very fine teeth, and exuberant light hair. His figure was admirable. He had the air of a man of quality, and filled one of the first stations in France, being a duke and peer of the kingdom. Besides this, he was governor-in-chief of the Gergovians; and conjointly with his father, Bernard of England, of the Bourguignons also, as well as general of the Gallacian infantry."[1]

When this description is contrasted with the deformed person and crippled position of M. de Conti, it will not be difficult to concede that the sacrifice made by Mademoiselle Martinozzi must have been a painful one. The marriage was, however, celebrated a few days subsequently in the king's private cabinet at Fontainebleau; and the exemplary conduct of the Princess de Conti more than justified the selection of her husband. At the same time, at a solemn convocation of the parliament, a decree was issued against M. de Condé, who, convicted of the double crime of lèse-majesté and rebellion, and as such deprived of the name of Bourbon, was condemned to death, in whatever manner it might be the will of the king. The Prince replied to this sentence characteristically by taking Rocroy; while Turenne, who from want

[1] Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules.

of troops was compelled to evade a general action, could only retort by possessing himself of Sainte-Menehould.

We must not, however, omit to mention another marriage which took place at this period; and which created a strong feeling at court. It was that of the Marquis de Richelieu with Mademoiselle de Beauvais, daughter of the first femme-de-chambre of the queen. The marquis was well made, young, full of intellect and courage, and had been reared in all the refinement of luxury. His elder brother being childless, the enormous wealth of the family was likely to devolve on him; and thus it was an alliance which the proudest beauties of the court would not have disdained; while the lady whom he had selected, although pretty and amiable, possessed no attraction sufficiently great to have induced a suspicion that she was destined to form so brilliant a marriage.

The Duchess d'Aiguillon[1] was in despair; and on the following day caused him to be carried off and conveyed to Italy, hoping by this extreme measure to weaken his affection for his plebeian bride; an experiment which, however, signally failed, as on his return he exhibited towards her an attachment which absence had failed to weaken. In her mortification the duchess declared that her nephews were progressing from bad to worse, and that she had great hopes that the third would complete the ruin of the family by marrying the daughter of a clerk.[2] It is certain, that could the

[1] Marie Madelène de Vignerod, the niece of the Cardinal Richelieu, married to Antoine de Beauvoir du Roure de Cambalet; for whom, as already stated, he had purchased in 1638 the duchy-peerage of Aiguillon, was the aunt of the marquis.

[2] The Duke de Richelieu had married Mademoiselle de Pons, attached to the household of Anne of Austria.

proud and haughty cardinal have risen from his grave, and seen the result to which all his ambition had attained, he would have shivered in his shroud.

At this period, *Madame* gave birth to a fourth daughter, greatly to the chagrin of *Monsieur*, who had entertained hopes of another son; and her life was in such extreme danger that MADEMOISELLE sent to request of *Monsieur* that he would allow her to see the invalid; but she received the cold reply that her visit was declined for the present. The Countess de Fiesque also took this opportunity of requesting the queen to permit her to pay her respects at the Louvre; when Her Majesty answered, that simply as the Countess de Fiesque she had no objection to see her, but that she must decline receiving the governante of MADEMOISELLE. Madame de Fiesque accordingly paid her visit.[1]

We have hitherto, owing to his tender age, been enabled to do little more than glance at the existence of the young king. It has now, however, become time that he should assume his fitting place in our narrative; and to enable him to do this, it is necessary for us to revert briefly to the last two or three years of his life. Even as a boy, Louis XIV. was singularly susceptible to female beauty. His first passion, if such indeed it merits to be called, was for Madame de Frontenac; the attraction of whose society was so great to the young sovereign that MADEMOISELLE, as we have already shown, built up a world of hopes upon attentions for which she was simply indebted to the companionship of her handsome lady of honour. This inclination was, however, nipped in the bud by Anne of Austria, who

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

was more far-sighted than her ambitious niece; and who discovered nothing but peril for her young son, in this intimacy with an experienced woman of fashion.

His next favourite was Madame de Châtillon; who, at the commencement of the Fronde, accompanied the royal circle from Paris, where the amusements of the court suffered no diminution from the menacing aspect of public affairs. The policy of the cardinal was to divert the mind of the king from passing events; and for this purpose, he was careful to conceal the whole extent of the evil even from the queen herself; and never to mention the subject of the war in the presence of Louis, save when he could make it serviceable, by expatiating upon the demerits of those who were opposing his own measures; for he had already learned to mistrust the intuitive penetration of the boy-sovereign, of whom, even at this early age, he was once betrayed into declaring that, "There was material enough in him to make three kings, and an honest man;" a libel upon royalty which seems strangely misplaced from the lips of a courtier.

Thus Louis had no care save that of surrounding himself with pleasure, and Madame de Châtillon was the constant associate of his sports; while so agreeable and almost indispensable did she make herself, that the young king soon forgot in her society the attractions of Madame de Frontenac; her bright eyes and ringing laugh producing an effect upon his affections which was as unwelcome as unexpected to the queen. Louis, however, was still a boy, and too timid to contend with so practised a coquette; whose unconcealed indiscretion with the Duke de Nemours soon afforded a subject for

the gossipry of the court. The young king had, moreover, to contend with the rivalry of Condé, then in the full blaze of his renown; and this fact, coupled with the death of M. de Châtillon, who held a command under The Prince, where he received a musket-shot in his body, of whose effects he expired on the succeeding evening, tended to emancipate Louis from his second peril.

The despair enacted by the young and beautiful duchess on the occasion of her widowhood became a new theme for the comments of the court circle; and was carried to such an excess that its sincerity did not remain for one moment doubtful. Her subsequent exile on the termination of the Fronde, however, removed her from all immediate contact with the sovereign, whose third inclination was for Mademoiselle d'Heudecourt, one of the maids of honour to Anne of Austria; but his extreme youth had hitherto been his best protection against the dangers by which he was surrounded.

Meanwhile the nieces of the cardinal-minister, who were peculiarly favoured by the queen, were accustomed to consider the Louvre as a second home; and Anne of Austria, naturally affable where her feelings were interested, dispensed in their favour with all the usual ceremonials of court etiquette. They consequently played, laughed, romped, and sang, as girls of their age are wont to do; and the young king lived gaily in the midst of them as though they had been his sisters, without a thought beyond the pleasure of the hour; while he was fated to bestow his first serious affections upon a femme-de-chambre of the queen, Madame de Beauvais, the mother of the lady who was

afterwards fated to become the wife of the Marquis de Richelieu, but who, at that period in her eighteenth year, was beloved by the Count de Guiche. This *liaison*, which is said to have been prompted by the queen herself, to whom de Beauvais was devoted, lasted for three months, when it was abruptly terminated by a jest of the young count, which Louis never forgave.

In a moment of confidence the king mentioned his conquest to his friend; and was repaid for the tale by a fit of laughter, as the count declared that His Majesty had taken an unfair advantage of so loyal a subject as himself, by superadding to the respect which he owed him as a monarch, that which he must render to a parent, being himself in pursuit of the lady's daughter. Louis felt at the moment when these unguarded words were uttered, that they must either be resented, or treated as a jest, and he at once resolved to affect amusement at the intelligence; but it nevertheless rankled, for he at once perceived the absurdity of his position, and could not support the superiority of the count.

The queen, as a matter of public expediency, affected a desire to remove Madame de Beauvais from the court; but Mazarin, with his usual policy, protested against such a proceeding, which he declared to be at once unwise and unnecessary; reminding her that what the king mistook for love would be the means of occupying his thoughts, and diverting his attention from more important affairs; and that the young monarch had, during this hallucination, left an unlimited power in her hands, which, under other circumstances, he would probably have disputed. Convinced by this

argument, the queen forbore all interference; which was, indeed, as we have shewn, soon rendered unnecessary by the agency of the Count de Guiche.

Louis XIV. was naturally a votary of pleasure; and the minister was, above all things, careful that amusement should never be wanting. Despite the penury of the court, every opportunity of dissipation was seized with avidity; and throughout the whole of the winter Paris presented one long festival. The marriage of the Princess Louise of Savoy, and the Prince of Baden, was made the occasion of long-continued rejoicings; the anniversary of St. Louis was celebrated with unusual pomp; and theatrical entertainments were of constant recurrence.

At this period Corneille produced his *Pertharite;* which however, notwithstanding the presence of the king at its first representation, proved an utter failure; whilst Quinault,[1] hitherto unknown, put his first comedy upon the stage, and at once secured his reputation as a dramatist. At the same time a company of actors at Lyons were representing a comedy in five acts, of which the fame reached even to Paris. It was the *Etourdi* of Molière.

Somewhat wearied of remaining a mere spectator of these public exhibitions, Louis began to interest himself

[1] Philip Quinault was the originator of lyrical tragedy in France, a style in which he has never been excelled. Born in 1635, he wrote in 1658 his first comedy, entitled *The Rivals;* which he followed up by a crowd of other dramas, that obtained equal success, and caused him to be received into the French academy in 1670. In the following year he purchased the charge of an auditor of public accounts. From that period until 1686, he produced nothing but operas, of which Lulli composed the music, and for which Louis XIV. bestowed upon him a pension of 2,000 livres. Quinault died in 1688.

greatly in the representation of ballets, and to cause them to be composed for the express purpose of being enacted by himself, his brother, and the principal ladies and nobles of the court; and as the hôtel du Petit-Bourbon was contiguous to the Louvre, its theatre was selected for these regal exhibitions. The queen and the cardinal exulted in the applause and admiration which Louis constantly excited in these strange masqueradings, and encouraged them by every means in their power; while, so devoted was the young king himself to the pastime, that in one of them he actually played five successive characters, those of Apollo, Mars, a Fury, a Dryad, and a Courtier; and submitted to the fatigue of assuming the several costumes, frequently as often as three times during the week. Benserade[1] had the exclusive privilege of composing the *libretti* of these ballets, which were one continued ovation to the young monarch, who was not in his own person exempted from the delivery of the most exaggerated and fulsome self-praise. Such, however, was the taste of the time; and if these vapid verses did little for the reputation of Benserade, they at least made his fortune.

It was in these entertainments that Louis XIV. accustomed himself to be regarded as a demi-god; and his brother, the Duke d'Anjou, who from his extreme beauty invariably represented a female character, to be worshipped as a goddess. We have already alluded to the misdirec-

[1] Isaac de Benserade, the poet, was born at Lions in Normandy, in 1612; and died in 1691 a member of the French Academy, to which he had been admitted in 1674. All the court were divided into parties, between his sonnet of *Job*, and that of *Uranie* by Voiture.

tion of the tastes and energies of the young princes, which it will be seen had continued from boyhood into youth.

There was a second theatre in Paris, in the hôtel de Bourgoyne; and ere long the taste for the drama obtained so much that these two no longer sufficed; and it was found necessary to re-open that in the Marais, where in bygone times even the thoughtful features of Richelieu had occasionally relaxed into a smile.

All these amusements, however, pleasant as they were, and much as they tended to the gratification of individual vanity, cost considerable sums of money; and the state chest was ill supplied. Upon the death of the Duke de la Vieuville, who had been superintendent of finance, Mazarin had named two individuals who were conjointly to perform his duties. One was the Servien,[1] who advised the substitution of poison for the antidote which Madame de Lesdiguières was anxious to convey to the Cardinal de Retz; and the other was the Advocate-General Fouquet, in whose person the cardinal sought at once to serve his brother, the Abbé Fouquet,[2] and to conciliate the parliament.

[1] Abel Servien had already been superintendent of finance, under Louis XIII; an office which was suppressed after the arrest of Fouquet. In 1644, he was sent with M. d'Avaux to Munster, and acquired a lasting reputation at the treaty of Westphalia, where he acted as plenipotentiary. He died at his château at Meudon in 1659. Many of his letters have been published with those of the Count d'Avaux.

[2] Abbé de Barbeaux and de Rigney. "He was," says Anquetil, "intriguing, bold, interfering with everything; creating misunderstandings in families, causing the men to fight, and defaming their wives and daughters. Nevertheless he was tolerated, even by those whom he had insulted, because he was a man of intelligence, in more than one respect. On an occasion when Madame de Châtillon

When his funds were exhausted, Mazarin applied to Servien, who declared that he could give him no assistance; and he was, consequently, compelled to turn for help to Fouquet,[1] who had been awaiting the application with anxiety; and who declared that, if the minister would confide in his exertions, he would find money, not only for the pleasures of the court, and for the necessities of the war, but also for a ceremony at which, owing to the default of the treasury, not even one of those who were so deeply interested in its accomplishment had yet dared to glance—the coronation of the young sovereign. Mazarin at once felt that he had encountered the very individual calculated to second his views; and happy to rid himself of a responsibility to which he was unequal, he conferred unlimited power upon Fouquet to raise funds as he saw fit; and the new minister thenceforth became, in point of fact, the real and sole superintendent of finance.[2]

Bold, ambitious, and uncompromising; at once a sensualist and a prodigal, Fouquet overcame every impediment and every scruple; and at the expiration of a few months had so amply redeemed his promise, that the cardinal, dazzled by the display of a genius for money-

went to his house in his absence, and carried away some of her own letters which he had refused to restore to her, he retorted by going in his turn into hers, making a general search, upsetting everything, and not finding what he sought, breaking the mirrors and the porcelain, and throwing the furniture out of the windows, to the great scandal of the whole neighbourhood; and yet they afterwards became reconciled."—*Louis XIV, Sa Cour, et Le Regent.*

[1] Nicholas Fouquet, born in 1615, was at twenty years of age *Maître des Requêtes,* and some years subsequently Advocate-General of Paris. In 1653 he was appointed Superintendent of Finance.

[2] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

getting, to which even his own was compelled to bow, confided to him, not only all the finances of the kingdom, but what was still dearer to him, the care of his private fortune.

A period was then finally fixed for the coronation of Louis XIV; and every one who was privileged to take a part in the pageant was immediately so much occupied by individual interests, that it was only as the time for the ceremony drew near that each awakened to a consciousness of the meagreness of the train which would follow the King of France to the steps of the throne. The Duke d'Orleans, when summoned, refused to leave his little court at Blois, unless certain concessions were made, which were definitely negatived by the minister, to the great increase of his discontent; while MADEMOISELLE, to whom nothing would have given greater satisfaction than so pompous an opportunity of displaying her magnificence at court, could not be present at a ceremony in which her father refused to appear. The Prince de Condé, under judicial sentence of death, was at the head of the Spanish forces; while M. de Conti, foreseeing the difficulty in which he should soon be placed, had already asked and obtained permission to leave his young wife, and to assume the command of the troops in Roussillon. The Cardinal de Retz was still a prisoner; and ten thousand individuals, belonging to the noblest families in the kingdom, had either exiled themselves with Condé, or adopting the interests of M. de Retz, remained neutral, refusing to sanction by their presence the movements of the court party.

The destitution was thus almost complete; but as, thanks to the exertions of Fouquet, there was no lack of

funds, Mazarin resolved that the coronation should suffer no delay; and it accordingly took place at Rheims with considerable splendour. One circumstance connected with the ceremony deserves remark. As the Archbishop of Rheims (the Duke de Guise) was not an ecclesiastic, the privilege of crowning the young king devolved upon M. de Soisson, one of his suffragans; and thus almost every individual who was present was in a false position, from the officiating priest to the peers; who, with the exception of the Duke d'Anjou, were not qualified to fill the places to which the absence of the princes of the blood had temporarily exalted them.[1]

On the morrow, the king was invested with the order of the Holy Ghost, which he, in his turn, immediately conferred upon his brother; and on the following day he left Rheims to join the army. It had been decided that M. de Condé should be compelled to vacate Stenay; and the sovereign was to commence his military career by assisting at the taking of the city.[2]

His apprenticeship to war was by no means calculated to imbue Louis XIV. with a taste for military life; for the avaricious cardinal, notwithstanding the extreme youth of his royal master, and his exalted rank, invested

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

[2] Stenay, situated on the Meuse, is a very ancient city, and was originally protected by strong fortifications which were destroyed by Louis XIV. It was one of the residences of the kings of Austrasia. The city was taken by Turenne in 1591; and a short time subsequently fell into the possession of the Dukes of Lorraine, who retained it until the period of its cession to France. During the war of 1650 it became the stronghold of the revolted princes; and was taken by Louis in 1654. In 1648 the king had given it to the great Condé, in whose family it subsequently remained until 1791.

his position with no adventitious attractions. All the arrangements were made in a spirit of parsimony unworthy of a great nation and a wise minister. The king could not boast a single equipage, but was constantly compelled to travel on horseback; while, having no table of his own, he shared that of the general in command. Nor was greater care exhibited in protecting him from danger. He was permitted to enter the trenches, and to join in the frequent skirmishes; where the balls which whistled past, or fell about him, never, however, succeeded in eliciting from him one gesture of apprehension. He was, at this period, in his sixteenth year; and received his first lessons in the art of war from the Marquis de Fabert,[1] who was one of the most remarkable men of the age.

The son of a bookseller and magistrate of Metz, Abraham Fabert commenced his career as a private soldier, became a Marshal of France, and might have been received as a Knight of the Order, had he not refused to furnish to the authorities fictitious testimonials of nobility, which they were prepared to admit upon his

[1] Abraham Fabert, born at Metz in 1599, entered the French Guards in the year 1613. He contributed to the capture of St. John d'Angely in 1621, and of Royan in 1622; and fought at the siege of La Rochelle. After having served in the war of Savoy, as well as in the religious wars, he was appointed captain of light horse, and distinguished himself in Piedmont in 1639, for which service he obtained the rank of captain in the French guards. In the campaign of Roussillon, in 1641, he took Argillers and Collioure. Named governor of Sedan, and Adjutant-General in 1644, he served in Catalonia and Italy. Created a marquis in 1650, and lieutenant-general of the king's forces, he fought in Flanders and in Champagne, took Stenay, was made Marshal of France, and died at Sedan in 1662.

oath, because such a proceeding was repugnant to his principles. He was believed by the troops to bear a charmed life, although he had frequently been wounded; while the people of Sedan affirmed that he had a familiar spirit which revealed to him all the secrets of the future, and to whom he was indebted for his constant good fortune; an impression which he took no pains to remove.

When the Cardinal Mazarin was compelled to leave Paris, he confided to M. de Fabert his money, his jewels, and his nieces; and now that he had resumed his authority, he intrusted to his charge the military education of the young sovereign.[1]

The anticipation of the marshal that Stenay would sustain a long and desperate siege proved to be erroneous, as M. de Condé, after having strengthened the garrison, had marched all his forces against Arras. Stenay was accordingly soon taken; and this point accomplished, it was resolved to attack the Spanish troops. One wing of the army reinforced M. de Turenne; while the other, comprising the king, formed two divisions under the Marshal de la Ferté and the Marshal d'Hocquincourt. A few unimportant engagements then took place between Condé and the royal army, which were, however, only the prelude to a general attack, in which the Spanish and Lorraine positions were forced; although, at the decisive moment, M. de Condé, who had reserved himself for this emergency, fell upon the victorious troops with such extreme impetuosity, that for an instant the fortune of the day

[1] Louis XIV, Sa Cour, et Le Regent.

wavered; but it was only for an instant; and, despite his chivalrous courage, he could not prevent all the cannon and baggage of his army from falling into the hands of the enemy; nor ultimately the raising of the siege of Arras; into which city the king entered a few days subsequently, for the purpose of congratulating his three generals, but especially M. de Turenne, upon the victory they had gained; after which he returned to Paris, in order to preside at a public thanksgiving at Nôtre Dame; while on the very morrow of that ceremony, when all was pomp and gladness, died in obscurity the Councillor Broussel, who, only a few years previously, had been for awhile the idol of the capital.[1]

With Louis returned all the pleasures of the court. His precocious courage, and the prospect which it afforded, were the one great theme of the joyous city. All was again gaiety and animation; ballets, tournaments, and jousts, in which the actors were habited in the costume of ancient chivalry, succeeded each other with unwearied activity; and all the most magnificent nobles then collected in Paris, gorgeously attired, and mounted upon superb chargers, cavalcaded in emulative pride beneath the balconies of the high-born dames, who contributed by the richness of their own costume to the gorgeousness of the spectacle.

Court balls were also frequent; sometimes accessible to every one whose position entitled them to such a privilege, and at others limited to a select circle; on which occasions, in order to give confidence to the young sovereign, who felt ill at ease in the society of compara-

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

tive strangers, the queen permitted a disregard of etiquette which startled those who remembered the severe ceremonial observed under Louis XIII. and the Cardinal Richelieu. Nor was Mazarin less anxious than Anne of Austria herself to contribute, by every means in his power, to the gratification of the young monarch, whose rapid advance towards moral emancipation he contemplated with such misgiving, that he ere long became conscious, that, in order to retain his own influence, he must detach himself by degrees from the queen (who from her peculiar position must necessarily submit to his defalcation without complaint), and secure the good opinion of the new power which was about to develop its resources. For this purpose, the crafty cardinal, as if sympathizing in the tastes of his royal master, exerted himself to further all his amusements, and even introduced into them a magnificence which had never before been displayed in France.

While these trivial pursuits were apparently absorbing alike the attention and the energies of the court, an event occurred, however, which compelled Mazarin to withdraw his thoughts from pomp and pageantry, and to feel that the eagle, although caged, still possesses its beak and its talons. A few days after M. de Retz was conducted to Vincennes, he learnt the death of his uncle, the Archbishop of Paris; and even prisoner as he was, he found himself perfectly eligible, as coadjutor alone, to claim the succession. The archbishop had expired at four o'clock on the morning of the 21st of May (1654), and at five, M. de Caumartin, being the bearer of a valid authority from the cardinal his nephew, took possession in his name of the archbishopric. Twenty minutes later

M. Letellier arrived, in the name of the king; but those twenty minutes had rendered his errand abortive. The power of M. de Retz over the minds of the metropolitan clergy, so far from being weakened by his captivity, had increased from the very fact of what they considered as a political martyrdom, to which his more sacred character had been sacrificed; while the Pope, on his side, addressed perpetual letters to the ministers to solicit his liberation.

An event had, moreover, occurred, which had carried the sympathy of the people with M. de Retz almost to enthusiasm. The chapter of Nôtre Dame had asked and obtained permission for one of its members to share his captivity; and its selection fell upon a chanoine related to M. de Bragelonne, who had been the fellow-student of M. de Retz, and to whom he had subsequently given his prebend. Unable to endure the confinement which, from affection for the cardinal, he had solicited; and which, despite all entreaties, he persisted in believing himself able to sustain, he fell into a state of profound melancholy, which was succeeded by an intermittent fever, under whose effects he destroyed himself, by cutting his throat with a razor; and the only civility which he experienced throughout the whole course of his imprisonment, M. de Retz declares to have been exhibited in the fact, that he was never informed of the manner of this death, until he learnt it from M. de Bellièvre on the day when he was transferred from the tower of Vincennes to Nantes. It, however, served him well with his friends; for as they did not fail to attribute the suicide of the chanoine to the rigorous nature of the

imprisonment, it awakened at once their compassion for the sufferings of the cardinal, and their admiration of the magnanimity with which he sustained the trial. From every pulpit in Paris fulminated the most incendiary discourses; the two grand-vicars publicly denounced his captivity; while the several curates re-echoed the cry of sacrilege; and amid this excitement appeared a pamphlet calling upon all the acting clergy in Paris to close their churches.

This species of excommunication was the more frightful that it came not only from the head of the church, but from the church collectively; and it was impossible to calculate the effect of such a denunciation upon the populace. Suffice it, that in his alarm Mazarin determined to capitulate; but in order to effect this, it was found expedient to obtain from the Cardinal de Retz his resignation of the archbishopric of Paris. The first attempt to procure this resignation was by menace; although the minister should long ago have discovered that the prelate was not a person likely to be intimidated by threats. Accordingly M. de Navailles, the captain of the guard then on duty, was despatched to the prisoner in the name of the king; and addressed him in a tone which, as de Retz himself declares, was altogether foreign to the courteous and gentle nature of the messenger, whom Mazarin had instructed to act more like an Aga of Janissaries, than the official of a Christian monarch. Unwilling, therefore, to retort upon the compulsatory harshness of M. de Navailles by a reply in the same spirit, M. de Retz requested him to permit that he should give his answer in writing; and this having

been conceded, he couched it in terms of sovereign contempt for both menace and promise, and concluded by a definite refusal to divest himself of his archbishopric![1]

Two days afterwards the cardinal received a visit from the President Bellièvre, for which he had on the previous evening been prepared by his friends; and as he knew him to be at heart a confirmed enemy of Mazarin, he awaited his advent with some curiosity, but without the slightest apprehension. His mission was to offer to the prisoner, as an equivalent for the dignity of which he was urged to dispossess himself, the abbeys of St. Lucian and Beauvais, St. Medard de Soissons, St. Germain d'Auxerre, St. Martin de Pontoise, St. Aubin d'Ange, de Barbeau, and d'Ovian. The cardinal was, however, inflexible; frankly declaring that he placed no faith in the fulfilment of a pledge to this extent, as Mazarin had offered no sureties, although on the part of M. de Retz he required the security of twelve of his friends; an arrangement which excited his utmost indignation.

The envoy, who participated in his feelings, then threw off the mask; and after a long consultation between them, it was agreed that the cardinal was by no means compelled to consider himself bound by a resignation dated from the castle of Vincennes, where and when he was in the power of his enemies; and that, consequently, should M. de Bellièvre be enabled to procure the omission of the clause respecting the sureties, the prisoner should sign the treaty at once; but that, meanwhile, he was to remain firm in his refusal, and to reject on the present occasion every condition save a pure and simple resignation. M. de Retz agreed, accordingly, to

[1] Mémoires du Cardinal de Retz.

this plan; and M. de Bellièvre left his apartment with all the gravity of an unsuccessful negotiator.

On the morrow he again visited the fortress; for Mazarin, who desired nothing so much at the present moment as perfect tranquillity, in order that he might be free to put forth all his strength against Condé, by whom he was once more menaced, readily lent himself to a compromise well adapted to conciliate the jarring interests in question. In exchange for the seven abbeys, the Cardinal de Retz was to tender his resignation; but, until the period in which it was accepted by the Pope, he was to continue a prisoner at Nantes, under the charge of the Marshal de la Meilleraie, to whom he was related through his wife; and whose life, as he himself acknowledged, had been saved by the coadjutor during the riots consequent on the arrest of M. de Broussel. Moreover, in any case, and whatever might ensue, the marshal, on the authority of the king himself, gave a written promise to M. de Bellièvre that the Cardinal de Retz should not again be delivered into the hands of His Majesty; no further mention being made of the sureties.

On the second day after signing this treaty, M. de Retz left Vincennes, under an escort composed of Light-Horse, Musketeers, and the Guards of His Eminence. The President Bellièvre bore him company as far as Port-à-l'Anglais, where he took his leave and returned to Paris; while the cardinal continued his journey to Nantes under the guard of Pradelle, who had originally escorted him to Vincennes. The latter, after remaining one day with his men in the fortress, also departed in his turn for the capital, and M. de Retz remained under the sole guard of the Marshal de la Meilleraie; who, even while taking

every precaution to secure his prisoner, made on the other hand great exertions to alleviate the tedium of his captivity. After receiving him with the most courteous politeness, he was no sooner installed in his apartment, than M. de la Meilleraie surrounded him with amusements. In the morning he was permitted to hold a reception, at which he received all the visitors whom he desired to see; in the evening there was a theatre which he attended whenever he thought proper; in fine, although a strict prisoner, and closely watched, everything was done which could tend to render his captivity less irksome. The society of the ladies of the city and its environs tended greatly to console and amuse the cardinal; and at times even caused him almost to forget that he was constantly under the surveillance of his gaolers, until he retired to his chamber, after which the door was guarded by six men at arms, day and night; while the solitary window placed near the roof, and strongly barred, opened into a court in which the guard-room was situated.

After the rigorous coldness of Vincennes such a life appeared almost liberty to the captive, who was, moreover, looking forward with confidence to entire freedom; but this expectation was soon blighted by the refusal of the Pope to accept his resignation; and the cardinal, whom this refusal threatened to condemn to an indefinite period of imprisonment, forthwith despatched a confidential agent to Rome to entreat the Pontiff to recognise his retirement from the archbishopric, and to authorize the appointment of whatever successor might be selected by the court. Innocent X. was, however, inflexible, although the agent of M. de Retz explained to His Holiness the steps which the cardinal had decided to take

so soon as he should agree to his retreat. He merely replied to the explanation by declaring that he considered it incompatible with his dignity to recognise a resignation which had been extorted by force, and could not consequently be rendered valid even by his sanction; while it would entail dishonour upon himself, should he permit it to be said that he had ratified an arrangement made in a state-prison.

M. de Retz received this reply with great uneasiness; for he well knew that although the marshal detested Mazarin, he had been the pupil of Richelieu, and therefore reared in the school of absolute and uncompromising obedience; nor was he long ere he perceived a change in the manner of his guardian, who affected to believe that the request which he had made to the Pope was a mere feint of which he had been previously well assured of the result, and that he had clandestinely secured the refusal to which he was now subjected; nor could all the protestations of his prisoner convince him to the contrary. Thenceforward M. de Retz felt a perfect conviction that the marshal only sought a plausible pretext to deliver him once more into the hands of his enemies; and in this opinion he was strengthened by the fact of a journey made by M. de la Meilleraie to the fortress of Brest; and the departure of his wife, who had only arrived a week previously from Paris, and whom he caused to leave Nantes, and to retire to her château; while these suspicions gained the greater consistency from a note which was placed in the hand of the cardinal by a lady-visitor, and which informed him that, should he not previously effect his escape, he would be transferred to Blois at the end of the month.

It was difficult for M. de Retz to profit by this warning; but he was, nevertheless, unwilling to consider his evasion as altogether impracticable, and accordingly commenced operations by inducing his friends to spread a report that the court of Rome was beginning to look with less reluctance upon his request. He next confided his project to the Duke de Brissac, who was an occasional visitor to Nantes, and who promised to do everything in his power to forward his views; and as the duke had a numerous suite, and was always accompanied by a long string of baggage mules, the cardinal at once suggested that he might make his escape in one of the chests with which they were laden. A box was accordingly made of larger dimensions than usual, and with a perforated lid to enable him to breathe freely during his journey; and so satisfied was the prisoner that he should by this expedient accomplish his object, that he already felt at liberty; but unfortunately for his hopes, M. de Brissac departed for Machecoul, where he remained during three or four days on a visit to the Duchess de Retz,[1] who dissuaded him from the attempt; alleging that it would not only endanger his own safety, but that it would render him guilty of a serious breach of hospitality towards M. de la Meilleraie, by whom he was received in all confidence, and who would be seriously involved by the result of such an adventure.

M. de Brissac, impressed by these arguments, consequently declared on his return to Nantes, that he felt convinced, should the cardinal persist in his intention, he would be smothered in the chest; and, moreover, frankly avowed that he could not reconcile to himself the breach

[1] Sister-in-law of the Cardinal.

of trust which, in his friendship for the prisoner, he had thoughtlessly contemplated; but he solemnly pledged himself that should M. de Retz succeed in making his escape beyond the walls of the fortress, he would exert every energy to assist his final evasion. As this was all that he would concede, the cardinal was compelled to accept his help upon his own terms; and having concerted their plans, the prisoner set boldly to work in order to accomplish his own deliverance.

He was accustomed to walk along a sort of ravelin which ran beside the Loire, and had already remarked that at that period (the month of August) the river did not reach the foot of the wall, but left a small space of land extending to the bastion; and that between this bastion and the garden in which the guard remained while he was taking his exercise, there was a trelliced door which had been placed there to prevent the soldiers from gathering the grapes. The project of the prisoner was a desperate one; for it was no less than, as if unconsciously, to close the door behind him, which, although it could not prevent the sentries from watching his movements, would still form an obstacle to their pursuit; and, this done, to let himself down by a rope which his physician, and the Abbé Rousseau, the brother of his steward, were to provide; as well as horses at the foot of the ravelin for himself and four gentlemen by whom he was to be accompanied in his flight.

The great difficulty of this attempt existed in the fact that it must be undertaken by daylight, and under the eyes of two sentinels who were only posted thirty paces apart; while the six guards who were responsible for his safe keeping, could fire upon him through the latticed

door. It was also necessary that the friends who awaited him should act with great circumspection, lest the appearance of mounted men so near the fortress should create suspicion; and it was impossible to dispense with their attendance, as he must necessarily pass through a neighbouring town which was the usual lounge of the garrison. There were moreover other precautions enforced by the distance from Paris, where it was essential to the cardinal to arrive with the least possible delay; and he had to elude the couriers of the marshal, by whom the alarm of his evasion would not fail to be spread almost on the instant.

Nevertheless, the cardinal persisted in his purpose; and at five o'clock in the evening, having strolled forth according to his usual custom, he drew the door which we have described quietly after him; seized the rope, which he found at the given spot; and succeeded in gaining the base of the wall which was forty feet in height, while one of his servants, who was in the plot, plied the guard with wine. One of the sentinels was about to fire on him as he threw himself from the wall, but M. de Retz, with great presence of mind, warned him to beware, as he would have him hanged if he persisted in his intention; and the man believing, as he afterwards confessed, that the marshal was a party in the evasion, withheld his shot. Two young pages, who were bathing, raised an outcry that the cardinal was effecting his escape; but, by a strange coincidence, their shouts were disregarded, for it chanced that at that precise moment a man was drowning farther down the river, and it was supposed that they were merely crying for help.

The four gentlemen whom he expected were already

awaiting the prisoner at the foot of the ravelin, where they affected to be watering their horses; and M. de Retz was himself mounted before the slightest alarm was given. Forty relays had been prepared between Nantes and Paris; and the party galloped off in the direction of Mauve, where, on being joined by M. de Brissac and the Chevalier de Sévigné, they were to cross the river. Unfortunately for the fugitive, the horse he rode having shied at the reflection of the sun upon the barrel of his pistol, (which he was compelled to draw from the holster in order to defend himself at the gate of the faubourg, upon being recognised by one of the sentinels,) he was thrown with great violence, and broke his collar-bone; and although he was speedily replaced in the saddle by one of his attendants, the agony he endured was so great that he was compelled from time to time to pull his hair in order to keep himself from fainting; and in this state he rode for five leagues, hotly pursued, ere he gained the boat, into which he had scarcely been lifted when he became totally unconscious.

When the party had crossed the river he made an effort to continue his journey; but his physical energies were exhausted, and M. de Brissac was compelled to conceal him in a haystack, where he left him supported in the arms of one of his own household. In this painful situation he remained for the space of seven hours; suffering intense bodily anguish, and perishing with the thirst engendered by the fever which supervened; without daring, although upon the very bank of the river, to permit his companion to bring him water, lest the disturbed appearance of the hay should betray

his retreat; and, meanwhile, he heard on every side the voices of the horsemen who had been sent in pursuit, some of which he distinctly recognised. At three o'clock in the morning he was released by his friends, and placed upon a litter, which was carried by two peasants to a barn about a league distant, where he was once more concealed among the hay; but being well supplied with water, and comparatively in safety, he fell into a deep and refreshing sleep.

Towards evening the Duke and Duchess de Brissac arrived with fifteen or twenty horsemen, and conveyed him to Beaupréau, where he remained one night, until the nobility had assembled: when M. de Brissac, who was extremely popular, succeeded in collecting more than two hundred gentlemen; and M. de Retz,[1] who was still more so in his own neighbourhood, joined the escort a few leagues further on with three hundred more. Thus attended, the cardinal and his friends passed within sight of Nantes, where they had a skirmish with some of the guards of the marshal, who were vigorously repulsed, and driven back within the gates; after which the party proceeded without further molestation to Machecoul, which being situated in the territory of Retz, was a place of safety for the cardinal, as at that period every noble was the sovereign of his own province.[2]

The injury which the cardinal had received rendered his intention of reaching the capital impossible, as the delay which it had occasioned had given time to his

[1] Henry de Gondi, Duke de Retz, the brother of the cardinal.

[2] Mémoires du Cardinal de Retz.

enemies to concert their measures; but their dismay was nevertheless great. The Chancellor Seguier, and Servien, who had proposed to poison him, were already preparing to leave Paris, when the report reached them of his accident and its results: upon which they contented themselves by communicating the event to the king, who forthwith issued an order for the arrest of the fugitive, wherever he might be found.

CHAPTER VI.

COURT OF LOUIS XIV.—OLYMPIA DE MANCINI—HER FAVOUR WITH THE KING—HENRIETTA OF ENGLAND AND HER DAUGHTER—RUDENESS OF LOUIS XIV. TO THE ENGLISH PRINCESS—MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN LOUIS XIV. AND ANNE OF AUSTRIA—ATTEMPTED OPPOSITION OF THE PARLIAMENT—EXTRAORDINARY PROCEEDING OF THE KING—THE CARDINAL DE RETZ IN ROME—MARRIAGE OF LAURA DE MARTINOZZI WITH THE DUKE OF MODENA—CAPITULATION OF LANDRECIES—MORE VICTORIES OBTAINED BY THE ROYAL FORCES—THE COUNT DE SOISSONS—ARRIVAL OF CHRISTINA OF SWEDEN—HER PORTRAIT, BY THE DUKE DE GUISE—JEALOUSY OF OLYMPIA DE MANCINI—THE RECEPTION OF CHRISTINA—HER DESTITUTION—HER PORTRAIT BY MADEMOISELLE—HER VISIT TO NINON DE L'ENCLOS—HER DEPARTURE—NEW CAMPAIGN OF LOUIS XIV.—DEATH OF MADAME DE MANCINI AND THE DUCHESS DE MERCŒUR—COMPLIMENTS OF CONDOLENCE—MORTIFICATION OF OLYMPIA DE MANCINI—HER RESENTMENT—HER MARRIAGE—COLDNESS OF THE KING—COURTLY CONJECTURES—THE ITALIAN OPERA—THE YOUNG STRANGER.

MEANWHILE Louis was once more absorbed in pleasure, and surrounded by a bevy of young beauties; among whom the most prominent were the Mancini, the Martinozzi, the Comminges, the Beuvron, the Villeroi, the Mortemart, and Madame de Sévigné, already admired for her graceful person, and beginning to

acquire a reputation by her witty and entertaining letters. Though he had smiled at the conceit of the too plain-spoken Count de Guiche, the young king had never either forgotten or forgiven the taunt to which he had been subjected by his favourite on the subject of Madame de Beauvais; and incited by the example of his most intimate companions, anxious to assert his independence, and prompted moreover by his natural tendency to gallantry, he resolved to attach himself to the most beautiful woman of the court; when having carefully observed all those with whom he was brought into immediate contact, his choice fell upon Olympia Mancini.

This young beauty, whose intellect rivalled her fascinations, was vain, witty, and ambitious; and deemed no sacrifice too great by which she could gratify either her ambition or her resentment. Her tact was unequalled, and her conduct was one long comedy. Towards the king she was all modest devotion; and even while she hung upon his words with a smothered joy which led her to form the wildest visions, she appeared to shrink within herself whenever he approached. Her demeanour with the queen was not less skilfully studied; she was devout, serious, and humble. To her uncle she was all submission and obedience; and with the young nobles by whom she was surrounded, and whose homage and admiration she received rather as a right than as a tribute accorded not only to her own beauty, but also to the position of the cardinal, she was at once coquettish, witty, amiable, and endearing.

On her first appearance at court, when the Marshal

de Villeroi uttered the prophecy which had since been partially accomplished by the marriages of her sister and her cousin, one of whom had become Duchess de Mercœur, and the other Princess de Conti, Olympia Mancini had given no promise of the radiant beauty into which she afterwards expanded. She was then thin and meagre, with a long face, a dark complexion, a large mouth, and an unpromising figure. At eighteen she had, however, revenged herself upon the gracelessness of her youth; for, if the testimony of Madame de Motteville may be taken, she had, as her person became more formed, acquired a singular fairness of complexion, and an attractive contour of countenance; her mouth had become smaller, and her Sicilian eye, which had always been large and beautiful, was full of light; while even her hands and arms had grown into a symmetry that rendered them remarkable.

In the absence of MADEMOISELLE and the Duchess de Longueville, Olympia, through the passion of the king, became almost the queen of the court; for although, in recognition of her rank, Louis always opened the ball with Madame de Mercœur, he had no sooner made this concession to etiquette than he resigned her hand, only to retain that of her sister throughout the remainder of the evening. Still Anne of Austria laughed at the comments of those by whom she was surrounded; and so resolutely refused to recognise in all these demonstrations anything more serious than a mere passing caprice, that there were not wanting those who suspected that the queen-mother desired nothing more earnestly than the union of her son, sovereign though he was, with the niece of the Italian cardinal. Thus no check was placed

upon this budding passion, at which the queen smiled, and the minister laughed incredulously; while Olympia herself began to dream that a crown would ere long be laid at her feet.

It was yet in its first fervour, when Anne of Austria on one occasion gave a ball in her own private apartments, to which no one was invited save her immediate circle; as it was intended merely for the amusement of the Queen of England and her young daughter, who were precluded by their misfortunes from all participation in the general diversions of the court.

We have for a considerable time made no mention of these royal exiles, whose life of retirement, and almost of obscurity, caused them to be overlooked, even if not forgotten; and the appearance of the fair and timid girl, who, bathed in blushes, half tearful and half joyous, entered the saloon of Anne of Austria that evening, created neither attention nor sympathy. It was, nevertheless, expedient that Louis, whatever might be the tendency of his inclination, should lead out the Princess Henrietta, whose rank, no less than her misfortunes, entitled her to this distinction; and the general surprise was consequently great, when, at the first sound of the violins, the young king, according to his habit, approached the Duchess de Mercœur, and took her hand to conduct her to her place.

Indignant at this breach alike of etiquette and of good-feeling, the queen-mother immediately rose from her seat, and withdrawing the hand of the duchess from that of her son, desired him in a low voice to commence the *bransle* with the English princess; to which he replied testily, that he was "not fond of little girls;" an un-

courteous rejoinder which was unfortunately overheard by Henrietta-Maria; who perceiving the extreme displeasure of her royal relative, and the cloud that had gathered upon the brow of the king, hastened to entreat that she would not constrain His Majesty's wishes; and the rather as her daughter had sprained her ankle, and was unable to dance. This remonstrance only strengthened the resolution of Anne of Austria; who replied by saying, that if the Princess of England were compelled to remain a spectator of the ball throughout the evening, the King of France must do the same; and this fiat having gone forth, Louis accommodated himself to the necessity with the best grace he could assume, and led out the little princess, who having, as well as her royal mother, overheard his ungracious remark, danced with the tears streaming down her cheeks.

It was at this moment that she first drew upon herself the attention of the court. She had been reared amid privation and tears at Colombe, whither the widowed queen had retired; and although she had attained her eleventh year, and was consequently near the age at which the hand of persons of her rank were already coveted by such of the European princes as sought to form a matrimonial alliance, her peculiar position had disinherited her of the privileges of her birth. The victim of a national revolution, exiled, powerless, living upon the bounty of her relatives, and overlooked by all who would have paid her homage had she been in more prosperous circumstances, she was rapidly growing in beauty, in intellect, and in grace, unheeded, and unencouraged.

On the departure of her guests, the first serious misunderstanding which had ever taken place occurred

between Anne of Austria and the king; she, remembering only his youth, ventured upon a severe reprimand; which he, strong in his position, resented with a determination as haughty as it was unexpected; declaring that he had been sufficiently coerced during his boyhood, and that he was no longer disposed to submit to a dictation of which he had long been weary. Abundance of tears were shed on both sides; and at length, after mutual concessions, a reconciliation took place, which was, however, far from tranquillizing the mind of the queen; who began thenceforward to reflect more seriously than she had yet done upon the possible results of a passion, whose first-fruits were the transformation of the king into a mere headstrong and ungracious stripling.

Those who had suspected her of favouring the pretensions of Mademoiselle de Mancini, knew little of the haughty and ambitious spirit of Anne of Austria. Her feeling of security had grown out of what she held to be the utter impossibility of so unequal an alliance. She well knew the extreme pride of Louis, and she had looked upon it as an impregnable barrier, which must place him beyond all peril; but she forgot, at the same time, to speculate upon the gratified vanity, and the ardent passions of his age.

Nor had the altercation a less enduring effect upon the king. He had at last asserted himself; and he resolved not again to fall back into the state of passive submission from which a few words had sufficed to emancipate him. He formed the determination at a critical moment; for he had scarcely insisted upon his social rights, ere he found an opportunity of asserting with equal authority his regal privileges.

Fouquet, who administered largely and ungrudgingly to his luxury, was anxious to ensure the registry of some edicts by the parliament, and communicated the necessity of their acceptance to the king, who immediately attended the meeting, and by his presence alone carried the measure; but he had scarcely left the chamber ere a proposal was made that the registry should be opposed; and immediately all the remnant which remained of the Fronde, all the friends of The Prince, and the adherents of the Cardinal de Retz, who only required a slight incitement to renew their disaffection, broke out into murmurs, which, like the breathing of far-off thunder, threatened to be the precursors of a storm. The king had, after attending the parliament, left the capital for Vincennes, where, since the departure of M. de Retz, he had established his summer residence; but the report no sooner reached him, than he despatched an order to the chamber to re-assemble on the morrow.

This arrangement disconcerted the whole court, as a grand hunt had been organized for that day, at which all the court ladies were to be present; and Louis was accordingly overwhelmed with remonstrances and entreaties that he would delay the assembly; but they were at once astonished and pacified by his assurance that the public business should not be permitted to interfere with the hunt.

Accordingly, at half-past nine on the morning of the 10th of April, the deputies of the chamber, who had been sent to meet the king, were thunderstruck to see him arrive in his hunting dress, consisting of a scarlet coat, a grey beaver, and high boots, followed by all the nobles of his court in a similar costume; and "in this

unusual attire," says the Marquis de Montglat, grand master of the wardrobe, "he heard mass, took his place with the accustomed ceremonies, and, with a whip in his hand, declared to the parliament that in future it was his will that his speeches should be registered and not discussed; threatening that, should the contrary occur, he would return and enforce obedience."

This bold stroke of diplomacy hazarded by a youth of eighteen, with all the reckless daring of his age, was calculated either to excite a general insurrection, or to ensure a passive obedience. Fortunately for the young monarch it produced the latter result. France was already weary of revolt; and the parliament, which did not fear to try its strength against the minister, did not care to contend against the king. The Fronde, consequently, heaved its last sigh upon this occasion in the chambers; and everything appeared to second the wishes of Louis.

From Machecoul the Cardinal de Retz had retired to Belleisle, whence, pursued by the troops of M. de la Meilleraie, he had embarked for Spain; and having traversed the Peninsula, subsequently reached Rome, precisely in time to join the funeral procession of Innocent X. his protector. Nothing more, therefore, remained to be feared from the restless prelate than his ill services at the papal court, which could not extend beyond an interference with the election of one of the friends of Mazarin to the Conclave; and could in no way compromise the interests of France.[1]

Meanwhile the minister found a consolation for this slight annoyance in marrying another of his nieces,

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

Laura Martinozzi, to the elder son of the Duke de Modena; who, without possessing the eminent qualities of her sister, the Princess de Conti, nevertheless, by her correct conduct and amiable disposition, endeared herself greatly to the noble family of which she thus became a member.

Nor was Louis XIV. less fortunate in his indemnification; for, ere long, news reached Paris that Turenne had obtained another victory, and that Landrecies had capitulated. Upon receiving this intelligence the king determined to assist in the campaign; and he accordingly joined the army, and proceeded to besiege the city of Condé, which was taken at the end of the third day; and within a fortnight St. Quilain also fell into the hands of the royalist troops; when Louis determined upon returning to Paris, leaving his generals to fortify the conquered cities; and he re-appeared in his capital only to be more lauded and more idolized than ever.

Olympia Mancini was still the first object of his attention. It was for her that ballets were composed, comedies performed, and festivals invented. The passion of the young conqueror was sung by Loret, the court-poet; recorded by Madame de Motteville;[1] and contemplated with increasing anxiety by the queen; who, on the occasion of a tourney given by the king in honour of the young beauty, failed not to remark the emphatic salutation which he addressed to Mademoiselle de Mancini, who was seated among the ladies of the royal suite;

[1] "The king, continuing to love Mademoiselle de Mancini, sometimes more, sometimes less, determined, in order to amuse himself, to celebrate a course at the ring after the fashion of ancient chivalry." —*Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire d'Anne d'Autriche.*

while every eye turned from the scarlet and white scarf and plumes of the sovereign, to the scarlet damask looped with white rosettes, worn by the fair niece of the cardinal. The games were led by the king himself, the Duke de Guise, and the Duke de Candale, each attended by eight nobles, and followed by pages and trumpeters. Every detail of costume and chivalry was strictly observed; and, as a natural consequence, Louis bore away the laurels of the day from his really less skilful, or more complaisant competitors.

It was upon this occasion, that the Prince Eugene Maurice of Savoy, who had recently become Count de Soissons by the death of his elder brother, first saw Olympia de Mancini. Intended for the church, he had for twenty years been under ecclesiastical tuition; but upon becoming the heir of his house, he had been suddenly called upon to assume his place in the world, and to exchange his breviary for a troop in the Mancini regiment of cavalry; while his family, anxious to prevent the extinction of the noble race which was destined to produce the famous Prince Eugene, lost no time in seeking among the first blood of the kingdom, a wife whose birth and virtues might alike entitle her to so great an alliance.

Having passed so instantaneously from the cloister to the palace, the Count de Soissons was a novice in all worldly things; utterly ignorant of court intrigue, and an enthusiastic admirer of female beauty. The loveliness of Olympia consequently made its impression; nor was he insensible to the lustre that was shed about her by the homage of the king, which was so undisguised as to delude many besides the young beauty herself into the

belief that she had become indispensable to his happiness; an impression which had grown into such strength as to occasion a visible coolness between the queen and the cardinal, who persisted in treating the whole affair as a mere passing caprice.

The court had scarcely removed to Compiègne for the summer, when it was announced to the king that Queen Christina of Sweden had arrived on the frontier, where she awaited his invitation to enter the kingdom; upon which he immediately gave an order to the Duke de Guise to hasten to meet her with an assurance of the sincere welcome with which she would be greeted. Anne of Austria also despatched the Count de Comminges, the captain of her guard, on the same errand; and the court were all impatience to witness the arrival of the celebrated daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, of whom such extraordinary reports were rife; and who had just abjured her religion and embraced Romanism in the capital of the Pope.

As the Duke de Guise was retiring, after having taken leave of Her Majesty, the Duchess de Chevreuse drew him apart, and entreated him, so soon as he should have seen Christina, to send her a written portrait of the pilgrim-queen; the duke, however, declined for some time to commit himself by such a document; and it was only upon the express promise of Madame de Chevreuse that it should be kept secret from both Louis and Anne of Austria, that he reluctantly consented to send her the desired letter. M. de Guise proved more faithful to his pledge than herself; for the private communication of the duke soon made the tour of the court circle. Thus it ran:

"I will, while I am myself cruelly uncomfortable, endeavour to amuse you by forwarding the portrait of the

queen, whom I accompany. She is not tall, but her figure is plump, her arm beautiful, her hand white and well formed, although more like that of a man than a woman; one shoulder higher than the other, a defect which she, however, conceals so cleverly by the singularity of her dress, that you might venture a bet as to its existence. Her face is large without being faulty; all the features the same, and strongly marked; her nose aquiline; her mouth rather wide, but not disagreeable; her teeth tolerable; her eyes very fine and full of fire; her skin, notwithstanding a few marks of small-pox, tolerably clear and fair; the outline of her face passable enough, but surmounted by a very fantastical head-dress—a species of man's wig, very large and extremely raised above the forehead, very thick at the sides, and terminating in thin points. The summit of her head is a mass of hair; and at the back it has somewhat the look of a woman's *coiffure*. Sometimes she wears a hat. Her boddice is laced across the back, as our doublets were wont to be; and her chemise is drawn through all round above her petticoat, which she ties very loosely, and not over straight. She is always very much powdered, with a quantity of pomatum; and never wears gloves; she is shod like a man, and has the voice and manners of one. She affects extremely to enact the amazon. She possesses at least as much pride and hauteur as her father, the great Gustavus, but is very courteous and kind; and speaks eight languages, and, above all, French, as though she had been born in Paris. She knows more than all our Academy and the Sorbonne put together; understands painting, as well as everything else, admirably; and is better acquainted with all the intrigues of our court than

I am. In short, she is altogether an extraordinary person. I shall attend her to Compiègne by Paris; so you will be able to judge for yourself. I believe that I have omitted nothing in her portrait save that she sometimes wears a sword with a belt of buffalo-hide, that her wig is black, and that she has nothing over her neck save a scarf of the same colour."[1]

The curiosity exhibited by the king on the subject of this extraordinary stranger was so great as to awaken a first pang of jealousy in the bosom of Mademoiselle de Mancini; who had so long been accustomed to find herself the all-absorbing object of his attention, that she could ill brook the lively expressions of his awakened interest in Christina.

The passion of Louis had not, however, at that period, sufficiently abated to render the cloud which had so suddenly gathered upon her brow, and the silence which she resolutely maintained on the subject of the extraordinary woman who had abdicated a throne, in order to free herself from the trammels of regal responsibilities, otherwise than as an added charm. His vanity was flattered by so marked an evidence of his power over the feelings of a young and beautiful woman; and with the natural weakness of his age, far from endeavouring to calm her fears, he fed them by a continual and conspicuous exhibition of his anxiety for the advent of one whom she already began to consider as a rival.

Nor was the queen less inclined to believe that the eccentricities of Christina might effect that change in the feelings of the king which her own expostulations had

[1] Extracted from the Mémoires of Madame de Motteville.

failed to produce. There is a strange charm in novelty; and Anne of Austria began to hope that she should acquire a powerful, although an unconscious, ally in the Swedish sovereign.

At Essonne[1] the royal visitor halted in order to be present at a ballet, a comedy, and an exhibition of fire-works, which had been prepared in her honour; after which she made her entry into Paris, escorted by two lines of armed citizens, who had received her at the gates, and who lined the streets from Conflans[2] where she had passed the night, to the Louvre where she was to alight. The crowd which collected to see her pass was so great that, although she reached Paris two hours after mid-day, she did not arrive at the palace until nine o'clock at night, where she was received by the Prince de Conti.[3]

The effect produced by Christina was more favourable than had been anticipated from her eccentric reputation; for although the singularity of her costume was displeasing at the first glance, it was one to which the eye became easily habituated; and where she had resolved

[1] Essonne is a village in the department of Seine and Oise, about thirteen leagues from Versailles. Its ancient name was *Axona* or *Exona;* and it was originally only a royal villa, which in the sixth century was given by Clotaire to the Abbey of St. Denis. Subsequently, this estate and some others were granted to the monks by the Abbé Hilduin in 832; when a village was built about it, with a church. The soil produces a great quantity of peat, which has been an object of industry since the reign of Louis XIII.

[2] Conflans is a town situated within one league of Pontoise, and six of Paris, where, on the 1st of October, 1465, a famous treaty was concluded between Louis XI. and the Count de Charolais, which was afterwards violated by the king.

[3] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

to please she seldom failed in the attempt; while the fearlessness and aptitude of her wit, the rich resources of her intellect, and her perfect familiarity with all the individuals of the French court, and all the events in which they had been actors, soon withdrew the attention of those around her from her voluminous wig, and masculine boots.

After remaining for a few days in Paris, she proceeded to Compiègne to visit the king and queen, and was met at Chantilly by the cardinal; who was followed two hours afterwards by Louis XIV. and the Duke d'Anjou, both of whom arrived as private individuals, and entered her apartment in the midst of the crowd of courtiers forming the suite of Mazarin. They had no sooner appeared than the cardinal presented them to the Swedish queen, remarking that they were two of the most nobly born gentlemen in France; when the reply of Christina, as she saluted her august visitors, was accompanied by a smile, as she observed that she had no doubt of it, since their birthright was a crown. She had remarked their portraits at the Louvre, and recognised them at once. On the following day, Anne of Austria, accompanied by the king and the whole court, set out to receive the royal traveller at Fayet, a house belonging to the Marshal de la Motte-Houdancourt. The carriage of Their Majesties was preceded by a strong escort of light-horse, gendarmes, and guards; and contained, besides the king and queen, the Duke d'Anjou, the Duchess de Lorraine, the Duchess de Mercœur, and the Countess de Flex, lady of honour to Anne of Austria.

When the illustrious party reached Fayet, Anne of Austria, aware that Christina was at no great distance, resolved not to enter the house, but to receive her royal

visitor upon the terrace, surrounded by all the court, who were in full costume, and blazing with gold and jewels. They had not long to wait ere the Duke de la Rochefoucauld announced the approach of the Swedish queen, whose carriage drove into the court amid a flourish of trumpets. The Cardinal Mazarin and the Duke de Guise, by whom she was accompanied, assisted her to alight, and she immediately advanced towards the queen, who moved forward three paces to receive her; and only a few brief instants had elapsed ere the two royal strangers were conversing in a frank and familiar manner, which astonished Anne of Austria, although she could not resist the charm by which she was hurried into this sudden intimacy.

For a moment, the French queen had been conscious of the ridiculous appearance of her royal visitor, but in the next, she had ceased to observe it; and when, on an allusion to the portrait of her son in the Louvre, she extended her arm with all a mother's pride, to exhibit one which she conceived to be still more faithful, and which formed the clasp of her bracelet, Christina exclaimed with enthusiasm on the loveliness of the limb that it adorned; declaring that she would willingly have made the journey from Rome to Paris for no other purpose than that of seeing a hand and arm of such perfect symmetry; Anne of Austria, who was extremely vain, and with reason, of this uncommon and essentially feminine beauty, was fairly won.

During the collation which had been prepared for her, Christina ate enormously, and spoke little. She felt that she had conciliated the queen through the medium of her vanity; while she had equally delighted the king by the marked courtesy which she had exhibited towards

Mademoiselle de Mancini; and she knew enough of courts to be aware, that she had consequently captivated the whole circle.

On her arrival at Compiègne it was found necessary to supply her with attendants of every description, as she had neither ladies, officers, equipages, nor money; and with the exception of M. Chanut, who had been the Swedish resident during her reign, and two or three insignificant and obscure gentlemen upon whom she bestowed the title of counts, she was absolutely unattended.[1]

Christina remained several days at Compiègne; during which she unequivocally astonished all about her; discussing politics with the ministers, science with the learned, and gallantry with the courtiers. She accompanied the queen to the theatre, where she wept heartily at the tragedy, and fell into convulsions of laughter at one of the coarse and pungent farces of Scarron; electrifying all the court by clapping her hands, and resting her feet upon the front of the royal box, as composedly as if she had been in her own apartment.

Remarking her taste for theatrical amusements, Anne of Austria next took her to see a tragedy at the Jesuit convent, which she ridiculed without mercy; a circumstance occasioned, as it was reported, by the fact that the head of that society had not paid his respects to her during her sojourn in Rome. On hearing this rumour, Father Annat, the king's confessor, waited upon her to reconcile her, if possible, with the order, but she received him in the same sarcastic spirit which she had exhibited at the drama; declaring that she should be delighted to make her peace with the reverend fathers, of whose power she

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Motteville.

was so well aware, that she should prefer a misunderstanding with all the sovereigns of Europe, to one with themselves; a fact which did not, nevertheless, prevent her from considering them to be very poor tragedians.

MADEMOISELLE, whose curiosity was naturally excited by all she heard of Christina, received permission from the king, (to whom she had written to request it, alleging, that although exiled from the court, she could not permit herself to visit a foreign sovereign without his sanction,) to wait upon her at Fontainebleau, where she was then residing; and after she had scrupulously arranged the minutiæ of her reception, insisting upon an arm-chair, and sundry other unimportant matters of the same nature, all of which were conceded with perfect indifference by the Swedish queen, she made an elaborate toilette; and, attended by four of her ladies, arrived at Fontainebleau, where she was received by M. de Guise, the Count de Comminges, and all the officers of rank who were in waiting upon the royal visitor; whom she found in a spacious saloon, surrounded by benches, in which she was about to witness a ballet.

The haughty and sarcastic princess confesses that, from the reports which had reached her, she was fearful that she should not be able to preserve her gravity during the presentation, and she was extremely alarmed at the prospect of committing so outrageous a solecism in good-breeding and dignity. But the result was very different; for as the ushers dispersed the glittering throng which had already assembled, she saw, as she describes, a small person, habited in a petticoat of grey silk trimmed with gold and silver lace, with a boddice of gold-coloured camlet, trimmed like the skirt; a handkerchief of Genoa point about her neck, fastened with a knot of ribbon

of the same colour; a light wig; and holding in one hand a hat, covered with black plumes: very fair in complexion, with blue eyes, varying greatly and rapidly in their expression, fine teeth, a large and aquiline nose, her deformity completely concealed by the fashion of her dress, and looking, upon the whole, like a handsome boy.

After a mutual embrace the princess remained to witness the ballet, highly diverted by the piquant conversation of her new acquaintance: and at its conclusion they proceeded together to the theatre of the palace, to see a comedy; where the rigid propriety of MADEMOISELLE was formidably outraged by the emission of some hearty oaths which Christina delivered with considerable unction; and by her habit of throwing her legs over the arms of her chair, and putting herself into attitudes common only to the buffoons of the theatres.

Finally, this Amazonian princess took leave of the court, to the great regret of Anne of Austria; and proceeded to Senlis, where she was magnificently welcomed by the Marquis de St. Simon; and thence again to the château de Fresné, on a visit to M. and Madame Duplessis; after which, to the consternation of every one, excited by a curiosity which she resolved at all risks to gratify, upon learning that Ninon de l'Enclos inhabited a country-house in the neighbourhood of Fresné, she sent her word that she was desirous to make her acquaintance; and an hour after the departure of the messenger, herself drove to her villa, where she remained for a couple of hours, and on her departure overwhelmed her hostess with expressions of regard.

This done, she availed herself of the hired carriages which the king had provided for her, and the money

which was to defray her expenses; and departed with her sorry suite with all the independence of a private gentlewoman.

On the morrow, the king and the cardinal in their turn took leave of the queen, in order to join M. de Turenne, who was in command of the royal army before Capelle; and as the enemy had left St. Quilain in order to reinforce it, a general engagement was anticipated. Seeing, however, that it was delayed, M. Turenne gave notice to the besieged that if they did not surrender on the morrow they would receive no quarter; upon which M. de Chamilly, who held the town for The Prince, considered it more advisable to submit than to incur the risk of a battle. Consequently, after remaining a few days at Guise, and having personally conducted a convoy to St. Quilain, the king once more returned to Paris, heralded by a victory which had been obtained without any loss of life, and which might fairly be received with rejoicing as it had not cost a tear.

The court festivals were, however, abruptly terminated by the death of Madame de Mancini, the cardinal's sister; and this death, which had been foretold to the very day by her deceased husband, strengthened the superstition of all those who were cognizant of the fact. Its effect on Mazarin was very great, and he forthwith secluded himself in his apartments; while Olympia and her sisters, sincerely afflicted by the loss of so exemplary a parent, retired to a convent to weep unnoticed and unchidden. But even there a newer and an equally heavy grief awaited them; for the beautiful Duchess de Mercœur, who was herself on the eve of becoming a mother, was so overwhelmed with anguish on receiving the last blessing

of the exemplary and devoted Madame de Mancini, that she was stricken with paralysis, and only survived a few hours. When the afflicting news of her danger reached him, the cardinal hastened to the hotel de Vendôme, but she was only able to welcome him by a faint gesture and a tranquil smile, for she had already lost the power of speech; and she expired the moment after his entrance.

The grief of Mazarin was intense. He had already been sorely tried by the death of his sister, but this last blow entirely overcame his self-possession; and the rather that the same prophet who had foretold this double demise, had also predicted that he himself would either die or incur disgrace in the year when it occurred. As he looked upon the young and beautiful woman who lay dead before him, he sobbed aloud; and there can be little doubt that his feelings were embittered by the remembrance of the prophecy which had foreshadowed this painful bereavement.

From the first moment of her illness, Madame de Mancini had considered herself as doomed; her husband, who was a great astrologer, having not only foretold his own death, and that of his son who was killed at the Porte St. Antoine, but also predicted that she would not survive her forty-second year. For a time she had believed that this last prophecy would fail, a few days only remaining to complete the given period; but when she became conscious of approaching indisposition, she at once resigned herself to her fate; and, on what she felt to be her death-bed, entreated her brother to protect her two youngest daughters, Mary and Hortensia.

To this he readily pledged himself; nor was it the only

duty which he was called upon to perform, for Madame de Mercœur left behind her an infant of a day old; the same Duke de Vendôme who was fated forty years later to save the monarchy of Louis XIV.[1]

On this occasion the clergy, the parliament, and the principal bodies of the state, hastened to overwhelm the cardinal with the most ostentatious condolences; and the journals of the day have recorded these pompous demonstrations, which prove how thoroughly Mazarin had repossessed himself of power.

The young king was, however, soon wearied of this ceremonial mourning, which ill accorded with his love of pleasure and amusement; and utterly forgetful, or regardless, of the grief of Mademoiselle de Mancini, he resumed the ballets which had been for a time interrupted; and a new representation, in which he was himself the principal actor, accordingly took place during the funeral services which the clergy were performing for the repose of the soul of the cardinal's sister; and Olympia required no further evidence to convince her that she had miscalculated her power over the heart of a king who could find diversion in emulating an opera dancer; and exhibiting himself crowned with roses, and attired in a tunic sparkling with spangles, while she was weeping for a beloved mother and sister.

In an instant she discovered the truth of her position: she saw that she had ministered to his vanity, but had never touched his heart; and she had too much pride to subject herself to a neglect which would make her a proverb to the court. The first pang was bitter, for her ambition and her vanity were alike trampled into the

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

dust; but she did not hesitate to immolate both the one and the other, in order to retain her self-respect. The Count de Soissons, of whose admiration she was already aware, had returned to court after a brief visit to his family; and the rumour had already spread, that the Princess de Carignan[1] his mother had entreated the queen to forward the interests of her son; and to select for him a wife worthy to enter the house of Savoy, and to become the bride of a grandson of Charles V.

The proud spirit of Olympia de Mancini rebounded at the hope of such an alliance; and without permitting herself to turn one thought upon the past, she hastened to impress upon the cardinal the marked change which had taken place in the feelings of the king; the uneasiness which his former preference had excited in the breast of the queen-mother; and the opportunity which now presented itself of accomplishing, through her medium, an alliance equal to those which he had secured to the Princess de Conti and the Duchess de Modena.

Mazarin appreciated on the instant the arguments by which he was assailed; and after complimenting his niece upon her prudence and self-government, promised to exert all his influence in the furtherance of so desirable an object; nor were the effects of his interference long doubtful, for, although on the very evening of the day upon which this interview took place, every one had remarked the anxious expression of the queen, and the tenacity with which she watched the most trivial actions of the king, only two days afterwards the cloud had passed away, and she was evidently at ease; while the cause of this rapid change did not long remain doubtful, as she was heard to say to the Princess de Carignan

[1] Daughter of the celebrated Count de Soissons.

that she had always felt convinced there was nothing to fear from such an attachment.[1]

In less than a week every difficulty was overcome by the gold of the cardinal, and the entreaties of the queen, who undertook to obtain the consent of her son to this alliance; little foreseeing, however, how readily it would be accorded; and only two days subsequently the betrothal took place, at the express desire of the king himself, in his own private cabinet, in the presence of Their Majesties, the Duke d'Anjou, the Cardinal, the Princesses of Conti and Carignan, Mademoiselle de Longueville, (who, it may be remembered, had long before attached herself to the court,) the Ambassador of Savoy, and many other persons of distinction.

When the contracts had been read and signed by the king, the queen, and the several witnesses, the Bishop of Rennes, grand-almoner to the queen, performed the ceremony of the betrothal; and at its termination the ambassador of Savoy presented to the bride, as the gift of *Madame Royale*,[2] a magnificent box ornamented with the portrait of the daughter of Henry IV; and a set of diamonds valued at more than twenty thousand crowns.[3]

Not one individual who possessed the privilege of the *entrée*, was absent upon this occasion; for, superadded to the thirst for amusement and variety which distinguished the court at that period, the additional stimulant of curiosity secured their attendance. The king and Mademoiselle de Mancini had not previously met since the question of the marriage had been mooted,

[1] Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire d'Anne d'Autriche.

[2] Dowager-Duchess of Savoy.

[3] Gazette du Temps, 24 Février 1657.

and some display of agitation was anticipated; but none was exhibited; for both Louis XIV. and the niece of the cardinal possessed too much self-possession to offer themselves as a spectacle to the court gossips, and thus a brief but courteous salutation was alone exchanged between them.

On the morrow, at eleven o'clock in the morning, the Count de Soissons entered the queen's apartment, leading his betrothed bride, that day to become his wife; and her extraordinary loveliness excited a murmur of general admiration, as she advanced and bent her knee to the gracious sovereign to whom she was indebted for the exalted rank to which she had attained. She was attired, say the chronicles of the time, in a dress of cloth of silver, bordered with jewels; and wore upon her head a single spray of pearls estimated at more than five hundred thousand livres. The marriage took place in the queen's chapel: and after dining in private with the Princess de Carignan, the bride and bridegroom proceeded to the apartments of the cardinal, where a magnificent fête awaited them, at which both the king and his brother had signified their intention to be present.

When Louis approached his new cousin to salute her, an honour which it was customary for him to confer on such brides as he saw fit to congratulate upon the occasion of their marriage, it was remarked that the Countess de Soissons turned very pale, and breathed with difficulty; but she soon conquered the emotion; and in another moment the blood flushed over her brow and bosom, and a smile rose to her lips. The king lingered for a considerable time beside her; and it was evident that the conversation

which ensued was deeply interesting to both parties, although no one sentence was overheard, as the courtiers were discreet enough not to intrude upon its privacy.

When the king at length rose to precede the guests into the great saloon, a strain of consummate melody heralded his appearance. Mazarin, who had, in his gratification at the splendid alliance of his niece, resolved to make his avarice for once subservient to his magnificence, had imported from Rome the principal musicians of the Pope's choir, for this express occasion; and the French court listened for the first time, at the marriage of Olympia Mancini, to the exquisite voices of Italian vocalists, pouring forth, in waves of harmony which rose and fell upon the ears of their astonished auditors like the soft but mysterious undulations of a summer sea, the finest compositions of Leo and Scarletti. This sacred music (for it was all such) had been adapted to words analogous to the circumstance; and the sublime canticles which had inspired each divine *maestro*, were now replaced by amorous ditties and sentimental epithalamiums; a species of metamorphosis common enough in Italy, however singularly misplaced upon this particular occasion, when the festival was given by one of the princes of the church.

Louis XIV. astonished and enchanted by a melody of which he had hitherto never conceived the existence, learnt with dismay that as all these extraordinary vocalists were members of the Sixtine chapel, they were compelled to leave Paris on the following morning, on their return to Rome. It chanced, however, that they had brought with them a young Florentine composer, who was an admirable performer on the violin,

and capable of conducting an orchestra. This youth was Lulli,[1] who was immediately engaged by the king, to remain in his particular service; but he also, perceiving that the French were at that period utter barbarians in music, made his conditions before he would consent thus to exile himself from his country; and a new band was formed under his own auspices, which received the name of the "little violins" in order to distinguish it from that already organized.

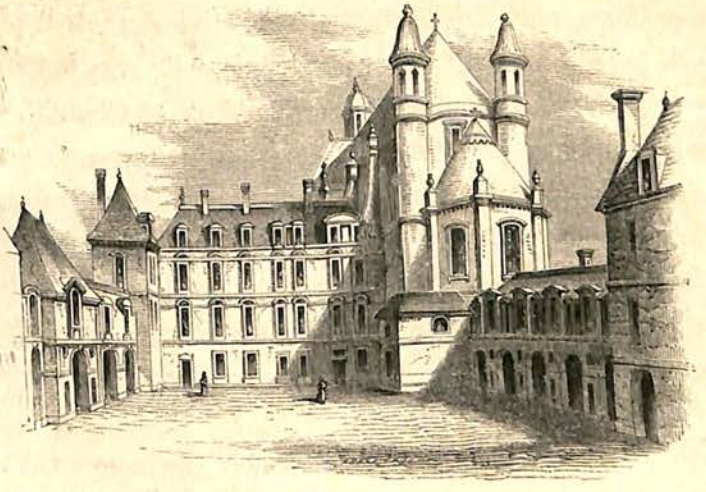
The great event of the day was, however, the appearance at this festival of a young girl upon whom the eyes of the king chanced accidentally to fall during a moment of abstraction; and upon whom they rested, until her own, which had been fixed eagerly upon his countenance, fell beneath his gaze; while, as her cheeks crimsoned with mingled shame and terror, large tears, of which she appeared to be utterly unconscious, dropped fast and silently upon her bosom.

The king was surrounded by a bevy of beauties, all anxious to secure his notice, and to repay it by their homage; yet for awhile he remained impassive to their attractions. He was tracing upon the mobile but irregular features of the almost child, (who, seated in an obscure corner, had suffered herself to be so thoroughly subjugated by the magic of the sweet sounds to which

[1] Jean Baptiste Lulli was born at Florence in 1633, and his talent so won upon the favour of Louis XIV, that he subsequently ennobled him, and appointed him to the secretaryship of the chancelry. In 1672 the Abbé Perrin ceded to Lulli his privilege of compositor to the opera, and from that period until his death, which occured in 1687, he enriched the French stage with many fine works; among which may be cited his *Armida*, *Isis*, *Perseus*, *Amadis*, *Atys*, &c.

she had been listening, that she felt like a detected culprit on exciting observation,) the changeful tide of feeling to which that flood of harmony had given birth.

This young girl, who had left her convent only on the previous day, in order to be present at the marriage of the brilliant Countess de Soissons, was her sister Mary de Mancini. Poor Mary! Little did her bounding heart, as it leapt with joy at the prospect of her emancipation from conventual rule, and the life of courtly pleasure upon which she was about to enter, forewarn her, that the serpent of despair was already coiling up his glittering folds upon the roses amid which she was about to tread.



CHAPTER VII.

MARY DE MANCINI—THE PROPHECY—HER PORTRAIT—HORTENSIA DE MANCINI—PRESENTATION OF THE SISTERS TO THE KING—SECRET PASSION OF MARY FOR LOUIS XIV.—MADEMOISELLE DE LA MOTTE D'ARGENCOURT—FLIGHT OF THE KING—RETURN OF LOUIS TO COURT—INSOLENCE OF MADEMOISELLE D'ARGENCOURT—REMONSTRANCES OF THE QUEEN—GROWING ATTACHMENT TO MARY DE MANCINI—HER CONVERSATIONAL TALENTS—NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE MARRIAGE OF LOUIS XIV.—PARTIAL RECONCILIATION OF MONSIEUR WITH THE COURT—RIVAL PRINCESSES—ALLIANCE WITH CROMWELL—ARRIVAL OF THE PRINCESS OF ORANGE—DEPARTURE OF THE PRINCESS ROYAL AND THE DUKE OF YORK—THE HAND OF MARY DE MANCINI DEMANDED BY CHARLES II.—REFUSAL OF THE CARDINAL—RETURN OF CHRISTINA—HER RESIDENCE AT FONTAINEBLEAU—THE MURDER OF MONALDESCHI.

We have already shown the accomplishment of one of the prophecies of M. de Mancini, and his daughter Mary had been the object of another, less sinister perhaps, but infinitely more subtle and mysterious. On his death-bed he had entreated Madame de Mancini to compel her to take the veil, as he dreaded her independent character, and her bold spirit, which unfitted her for social life; adding that, should his request be

neglected, she would be the cause of much evil.[1] In compliance with this injunction, the anxious mother placed both herself and her sister Hortensia, who was her junior by a year, in the convent of St. Mary at Chaillot, with the intention, when the younger should have attained to a fitting age for her entrance into the world, of inducing Mary to pronounce her vows; and upon her own bed of death she repeated alike the prediction and the design to the cardinal; who had, however, only in vague, although earnest terms, promised to protect the orphan girls.

Mary was so mere a child when the sentence was pronounced against her, and the years which she had passed under a monastic roof had so habituated her to self-control, that she exhibited no traces of the wilful and overbearing spirit which had been attributed to her; and whether it were this fact which induced the cardinal to neglect the dying injunctions of his sister; or that, his ambitious hopes having been frustrated by the failure of Olympia upon the affections of the king, he resolved to make another attempt to place the crown of France upon the brow of one of his younger nieces; it is certain that he availed himself of the marriage of Madame de Soissons to withdraw both Mary and Hortensia from their convent.

Mary was at this period in her fifteenth year; and from her very childhood had been so constantly accustomed to hear the personal beauty of her sisters extolled, that she had instinctively imbibed a conviction of her own deficiency in attraction, which was strengthened by

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Motteville. *Pièces Historiques*, &c.

the constant contemplation of Hortensia, who already gave promise of a future loveliness which was destined to eclipse that of all her sisters. Strong in this belief, Mary consequently became indifferent to mere external advantages, and did not even seek to avail herself of those which she actually possessed; and yet Madame de Motteville, who from her great attachment to the queen cannot be suspected of being the friend of Mary de Mancini, thus describes her at this period.

"Mary Mancini was of a dark and somewhat sallow complexion, with a long thin throat and arms, a large flat mouth, fine teeth, a tall and slender figure, and harsh dull eyes, which, however, gave promise of future softness and animation." A contemporaneous chronicler[1] gives a still more favourable impression of her appearance. "She was not a beauty," he says; "but her movements, her manner, all the bearing of her person was the result of a nature guided by grace. Her look was tender; the accent of her voice enchanting; her genius was great, substantial, and extensive, and capable of the grandest conceptions. She wrote both good prose and pleasing poetry; and Mary Mancini, who shone in a courtly letter, was equally capable of producing a political or state despatch. She would not have been unworthy of the throne, if, among us, great merit had been a title to obtain it."

There was nothing sufficiently striking, however, in such an appearance, to catch the sated fancy of the king; and upon Hortensia alone, who was still a mere child, did the minister for an instant speculate. But for a time

[1] Dreux du Radier.

even the budding beauty of Hortensia was overlooked by the young sovereign, although from the moment of their arrival at court the sisters became the privileged inmates of the Louvre, as Victoria and Olympia had previously been. Louis had, indeed, inquired the name of the young girl by the singularity of whose speaking countenance he had been for a moment impressed; and on learning that she was one of the nieces of the cardinal, had desired that both the sisters should be presented to him; but beyond this act of courtesy, simply intended to conciliate the minister, he had evinced no interest in their existence.

Such was, unfortunately, far from being the case with Mary. Even in the rigid circle of her convent she had perpetually heard the personal grace and the high qualities of the young monarch discussed with enthusiasm; and she had accustomed herself to dwell upon his idea with an intensity of admiration of which so ardent and impassioned a nature as her own could alone have been capable. Upon the rare occasions on which the sisters had been permitted to pay their respects to the queen; such as her birth-day, the festival of St. Louis, and the commencement of the new year; while Hortensia was wild with delight on seeing herself attired in a more becoming costume, and anticipating with girlish eagerness the pleasures of the day, Mary was only speculating upon the probability of obtaining a glance at the king; although, amid the court ceremonies, he vouchsafed no notice of the two timid girls, who, having performed their accustomed homage, were forthwith conducted once more to their convent. Still she had looked upon him, listened to his voice, watched his every movement in the dance, and felt her

heart quail, she knew not wherefore, when she saw his smile beam upon her sister. These memories sufficed to fill her solitude, and to exalt her imagination; but still, no hope that the idol at whose shrine all bent down in almost more than worldly worship would ever waste one thought upon herself, passed across her mind. She was contented to listen and gaze on in silence; and when she finally quitted Chaillot, her one great dream of joy was based upon the certainty of frequent contact with the faultless mortal whom she had invested with all the perfections of an excitable and devoted fancy.

It is possible that the original impression produced upon the king by the intellectual expression of Mary de Mancini, might, however, have inspired him with sufficient curiosity to induce a desire of cultivating her society, when he found her included among the ladies of the queen's household, had not his attention been directed at the time to Mademoiselle de la Motte d'Argencourt, who had just been appointed one of the maids of honour. A member of the family of Conti, her high birth alone ensured to her the protection of Anne of Austria; and it was at once anticipated that her appearance and acquirements would attract the attention of the young sovereign. Although not of striking beauty, Mademoiselle d'Argencourt was graceful and pleasing; and her deep blue eyes and fair hair, contrasted with her dark eyebrows and clear brown skin, gave a singular vivacity to the expression of her countenance, which was full of charm. Her manner was courtly, and her figure very fine; she expressed herself admirably, and danced to perfection; and she had no sooner been admitted to the private parties of the queen, than she became the object

of the king's attentions; and that so undisguisedly, that Anne of Austria found herself once more compelled to expostulate; but Louis was invulnerable to the reprimand; and on the first opportunity which presented itself, declared to the young lady the sentiments with which she had inspired him, and offered, should she return his passion, to protect her from the displeasure of both the queen and the cardinal.

Mademoiselle d'Argencourt had, however, already bestowed her heart elsewhere; and would not consent to forego her love for the gratification of a worse than questionable ambition.[1] She consequently met the protestations of her royal lover with a declaration of her own scruples, so gracefully and femininely expressed, that Louis, in despair, believing for the moment that his happiness actually depended upon the gratification of this new caprice, rushed, in his first burst of disappointment, to the queen, to apprise her that if Mademoiselle d'Argencourt persisted in her coldness, he must leave Paris until he had conquered his passion. Anne of Austria heard the declaration with undisguised pleasure; and complimented her son upon the propriety and becoming dignity of his intention, promising to consult the cardinal as to the most eligible means of carrying his purpose into effect.

This was soon accomplished; for no proposition could be more agreeable to Mazarin, who had been watching with a jealous eye the interference of the young lady of

[1] The mere gossips of the court assigned to her as a lover M. de Chamarante, the king's first gentleman, who was commonly called "the handsome Chamarante;" while the more uncharitable whispered that she had attached herself to the Marquis de Richelieu, the husband of Mademoiselle de Beauvais.

honour with the prospects of his own nieces; and he forthwith advised the love-sick monarch to reside for a time at Vincennes. Louis acted upon this counsel; passed a week in the strict observances of a devotion which always grew upon him in seasons of annoyance; and at the termination of ten days, believing that he had effectually overcome his passion, returned to court. During his absence, however, Madame d'Argencourt, who had speculated upon the attractions of her daughter to advance the fortunes of the family, satisfied that since her marriage the hopes which had been based upon the preference of the king for Olympia de Mancini were at an end, and ignorant that the cardinal had formed a fresh design on the heart of the susceptible young monarch, alarmed by the sudden retreat of Louis, requested an interview with the minister, to whom she made the infamous proposal, that should he desire to encourage the nascent passion of the sovereign she would pledge herself that her daughter should never seek to attain to any higher rank than that of His Majesty's mistress; while she would, on her part, in acknowledgment of the benefit which must necessarily accrue to her connexions, communicate to himself everything relating to the king, which might be confided to her.

The minister saw at once the advantage to be gained by such a circumstance, and, consequently, did not hesitate to promise all she wished; listening, moreover, with courteous attention to whatever she at that moment profited by the opportunity to divulge; and thus armed in one quarter, he next proceeded to examine into the truth of the rumours which had vaguely reached him of a previous attachment on the part of the lady. In this

attempt he succeeded so well, that he not only discovered the object of her affection, but even procured a letter, authentic or forged, which was stated to have passed between the parties. This done, he hastened to explain all the circumstances to Anne of Austria, and it was determined that their united thanks should be offered to Madame d'Argencourt for the sacrifice which she had been willing to make for the happiness of His Majesty; coupled with the assurance that it was no longer necessary, as the king had already overcome his passing inclination.

On his return, both the queen and the cardinal had every reason to hope that such was in fact the case; for Louis scrupulously avoided every opportunity of meeting Mademoiselle d'Argencourt; and whenever they were accidentally brought into contact, simply saluted her with a cold courtesy which betrayed no trace of latent passion. There can be no doubt that the previously coy beauty had meanwhile been tutored by her unworthy mother; for two days after the re-appearance of the king a ball took place at court, of which he was doing the honours, when Mademoiselle d'Argencourt entered the room, magnificently attired; and she had no sooner made her courtesy to the queen than she walked straight up to the young monarch, before the eyes of the whole circle, and requested him to do her the favour of dancing with her. At this unheard-of request Louis turned pale, and suffered his hand to fall into that of the fair petitioner with an embarrassment which continued throughout the bransle. Meanwhile the exultation of the triumphant beauty was conspicuously exhibited; and she drew general attention upon the emotion of the young sovereign.

A glance exchanged between the queen and Mazarin served to convince both that the moment was important; and Anne of Austria seized the first opportunity to represent to her son in how short a time he had subjected himself to a liberty, from which, by a more guarded line of conduct, he would have been preserved; while the cardinal, having suffered his pride to feel the humiliation to which it had been exposed, followed up the expostulation of the queen-mother by placing in his hands the intercepted letter; and informing him of the indiscretion which had been displayed by Mademoiselle d'Argencourt, for which knowledge he was indebted to the communications of her mother; and by these means, succeeded in arousing the indignation of the king. Moreover, at this precise moment, Madame de Beauvais made a formal complaint of the unhappiness which she had caused to her daughter, the Duchess de Richelieu; and she had no sooner done so than Mademoiselle d'Argencourt received an intimation that she was forthwith to retire to the convent of St. Mary at Chaillot; an arrangement to which she offered no opposition; and although she never took the vows, and that after a brief period she was left at perfect liberty to return to the world, she remained in that community until her death.[1]

Mazarin again triumphed; the pride of Louis XIV. had obliterated his passion; and when the perpetual pleasures by which he was surrounded began to pall, he once more looked around him for a more absorbing object of interest; and, disregarding the beauty of her younger sister, attached himself to Mary de Mancini. Convinced at length that the king felt pleasure in her society, the

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

timid reserve of this extraordinary woman disappeared; and although her devotion led her to treat him upon all occasions with a deference and respect which satisfied his pride, and gratified his self-love, she, nevertheless, conversed with him with a frankness to which he was totally unaccustomed. This intimacy, encouraged by Mazarin, and witnessed without misgiving by the queen, soon attracted attention; and a few of the boldest among the courtiers even ventured allusions upon the subject to Louis himself; who at first affected to laugh, although these comments induced him to watch Mary more closely, and he soon became convinced, that, although his court could boast of women more beautiful in person, she was unrivalled alike for intellect and wit.

No one sustained an argument, or related an anecdote, with the piquancy of Mary de Mancini. In her hands dulness grew into point, and reason became palatable. There was no weariness within the circle of her influence; and even wisdom crowned itself with roses when she introduced it to the company of the loves and graces. But the great charm of Mary existed, after all, in the heart-whole affection which she had given to the young king; an affection which led her to weep over the defects of his education, and to exert all her efforts to remove them. From her lips he heard truths boldly spoken, which none had ever before ventured even to whisper: she conversed with him upon subjects of which, although they involved his dearest interests, he was almost ignorant; she awakened in his breast the noblest impulses, and the most worthy ambition; and while she loved him as he was, she strove to make him comprehend all that he ought to be.

Accustomed to unlimited admiration and undeviating worship, Louis was for a time amazed and bewildered by the honest frankness with which this mere girl ventured to criticise his actions, and to explain to him the motives and impulses by which he had been governed; but ere long he became thralled by the strength of an intellect with which he found his own unable to compete; and while he shared his amusements and pleasures with the obsequious crowd around him, he turned to Mary upon every occasion of difficulty for strength and help.

Nevertheless, the cardinal soon found it necessary to occupy himself with an event, the most likely of all others to render his niece wretched, through the very medium of the attachment which he had himself encouraged—the marriage of the king. It might be that, aware of the hold which the intellect of Mary had already taken upon the mind of Louis, he believed that obstacles would only strengthen her power; or, what is still more feasible, that it was necessary to divert the attention of the queen from the engrossing effects of this new attachment; while it is, at all events, certain that he selected this precise period to bring forward his most forcible arguments on the expediency of some eligible matrimonial alliance being decided upon for the young sovereign.

European princesses were not wanting who might with reason pretend to such a marriage. In the first place, there was MADEMOISELLE, whose enormous wealth, as well as her high birth, rendered her a fitting candidate for the throne to which it was well known that she had long aspired. It was with no other view that she had made herself conspicuous during the civil war; and it had even been reported to Anne of Austria, that when

it was required of her to permit the royalists to enter Paris, she had replied, that if they would pledge themselves to marry her to the king, she would at once deliver up the city: upon which the queen had retorted, with a bitter smile, and a somewhat unregal petulancy, that in that case they would pass beside it without entering, for that "the king was not for her nose, although it was a long one."[1] Undignified as the rejoinder had been, it was, nevertheless, decisive; and from that time MADEMOISELLE was never again thought of as a wife for the king.

Meanwhile a species of reconciliation had been effected between the court and the Duke d'Orleans, through the agency of the Duchess de Guise and M. de Montresor; in consideration of which His Royal Highness, with his characteristic facility on such occasions, sacrificed the interests of the Duke de Beaufort, the Duchess de Montbazon, and, in short, all who had served him during the war; while even after this concession he found himself as powerless as ever. When he went to La Fère, where the court were sojourning, the cardinal affected to be confined with gout, because he would not go to meet him; and after having had an interview with the king and queen, he accordingly proceeded to the chamber of the minister; thus reversing their relative positions, and affording a great and public triumph to Mazarin, of which the duke himself was so conscious, that, after remaining only two or three days at court, he returned in no very placid mood to Blois.

The partial reconciliation of Gaston with the court, had induced many to believe that an alliance would in all

[1] Mémoires de Laporte.

probability be formed between the young sovereign and his elder daughter by the second marriage; but this arrangement by no means accorded with the views of the cardinal, who had no reason to favour the projects of the king's uncle, by whom he had been so frequently thwarted in his own plans; and consequently this match was at once negatived. The princesses of England and Portugal were alike declared to be ineligible; for the former was poor and disinherited, Cromwell having for the moment usurped, if not the throne, at least the sovereign power; while, although the Count de Comminges, who was ambassador at Lisbon, had not only written to inform Mazarin that the Queen of Portugal earnestly desired to see her daughter the wife of the French king, but had even forwarded a miniature likeness of the princess; it was whispered that the portrait was extremely flattered, and that if the sovereign placed any reliance upon the copy, he would find himself sorely disappointed when he encountered the original; and thus the cardinal, who was aware that this was an important consideration with Louis, replied by alleging the impossibility of the alliance. The disappointment was great, both to the Lisbonese court, and to Comminges himself, to whom the queen-mother had offered an immense sum of money in the event of his succeeding in the negotiation.

At length the minister turned his eyes upon Marguerite of Savoy, the niece of the Queen of England, although without any of the energy that such an event would have appeared to demand; a fact which caused suspicions that he had merely availed himself of her name to compel the King of Spain to decide upon the cession of his own daughter, the Infanta Maria Theresa, an alliance for

which Anne of Austria had long been anxious as well as her minister;—Mazarin from its political importance, and the queen from attachment to her own family. Hitherto, however, the marriage had been impossible, the Infanta Maria Theresa being an only child, and consequently heir to the throne, a fact which effectually prevented her from becoming the wife of a reigning sovereign; but, as though the star of Louis XIV. were to be ever in the ascendant, the Queen of Spain had, at this particular period, given birth to a son, which released the princess from her exclusive position as heiress presumptive; and from the day upon which the intelligence of this event reached the court of France, Mazarin never lost sight of Spain; or rather of the states of Flanders and Brabant, which he had long desired to merge into the French kingdom.

While these negotiations were pending, Louis formed an alliance with Cromwell, who forwarded an ambassador to the court of France; upon which the ministers intimated to Charles II, who still lingered at St. Germain in the hope of succeeding in his pursuit of MADEMOISELLE, that they desired his departure; nor did he delay it, having naturally no inclination to subject himself to daily contact with the envoy of the Commonwealth. As if to compensate, however, to the Queen of England for this new mortification, the princess-royal her daughter, widow of the Prince of Orange, arrived at Paris on a visit to her exiled relatives, surrounded by magnificence, and blazing with jewels. Rumour assigned her appearance at that particular juncture to a desire of captivating Louis; but if such indeed were her errand, it signally failed, the king not having exchanged a word with her during her stay. It was, however, also reported that Anne of Austria was

extremely pleased by her advent; and that she had reason to believe that in the event of the princess attracting the attention of her son, she would readily abjure her religion in order to become his wife. The marked discourtesy of Louis of course rendered every such speculation needless; and it was the more conspicuous, inasmuch as the princess-royal ought by her birth to have commanded the respect and deference of every one by whom she was approached; while she had scarcely derogated in her marriage, for although the principality of Nassau was not ancient, it was, nevertheless, a very illustrious name. By Anne of Austria she was received with great distinction; and as the princess, from her recent widowhood, did not wish to appear in public, the queen admitted her to her intimacy, and gave assemblies for her amusement in her own private apartments.[1]

The departure of the princess-royal was closely followed by that of the young Duke of York, who left France to join his royal brother in Holland, by command of Mazarin; compelled to this step by the rigid will of Cromwell, who, in signing his treaty with France, had not yielded one inch of ground to the pretension of royalty; but had met Louis on equal terms, insisting upon his bestowing upon him in his letters the title of *brother*, and permitting his own secretary to sign the treaty before the French plenipotentiary.

While this alliance was pending, Charles II. wrote to the cardinal to ask the hand of his niece, Mary de Mancini; but his shattered fortunes, which had driven him to solicit the marriage, formed a sufficient cause for refusal

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

on the part of the minister, who, it was whispered, would willingly have bestowed the same hand upon the son of the usurper Cromwell, which he had declined to yield to the legitimate King of England. Thus much, at least, is certain; that when he saw the path to the throne once more opening to the long-persecuted Stuart, he endeavoured to revive the negotiation, but without effect.

Meanwhile, amid all the gaiety and profusion of the court, the unfortunate Henrietta, the illustrious daughter of Henry IV, finding that the scanty means which were provided for her subsistence by the French government were both grudgingly and uncertainly bestowed; and that the position of Cromwell was attaining added strength every hour from his recognition by foreign powers; found herself reduced to the necessity of entreating the cardinal to obtain from the Protector the payment of her dowry. This was the most bitter pang which she had yet encountered, for it was craving food from the very hand which had led her husband to a scaffold; but she had no alternative; and as she looked at her helpless daughter, destitute not only of the luxuries common to her rank, but of the very comforts requisite to her age and sex, she bowed her stricken spirit to its task.

Mazarin repaid her ill for this confidence in his sympathy, however; for having personal views upon Cromwell, he did not care to exhaust his influence on subjects which were irrelevant to his own interests; and Henrietta, in whose behalf he merely urged a faint and cold request, found her claim disallowed, and herself condemned to remain, not only in her accustomed state of privation, but also crushed beneath the weight of another and a keener mortification than any to which she had

previously been subjected; and separated, moreover, from both her sons, who had joined the combined forces of the Prince de Condé and Don John of Austria, where they were bearing arms against the country by which they had been so heartlessly abandoned.[1]

The next royal arrival at the court of France was once more that of Christina; who, on this second occasion, exhibited so much less ceremony than she had formerly displayed, that she reached Fontainebleau before the court were even apprised of her return; which they no sooner learnt than she received an intimation not to proceed beyond that palace; a command which was, nevertheless, so courteously worded that she found herself in one moment its sovereign mistress. She had not, however, long been its inmate, ere the frightful tragedy of Monaldeschi took place; and the sentiment of disgust and horror which it excited was so universal, that in the first burst of his indignation the king desired Cardinal Mazarin to signify to her his extreme displeasure. There can be no doubt that the letter of the minister highly exasperated the Swedish queen, who returned the following characteristic reply:—

"Mr. Mazarin; those who acquainted you with the details regarding Monaldeschi, my equerry, were very ill-informed; and I consider it very extraordinary that you should have committed so many persons in order to ascertain the truth of the case. Your proceeding ought not, however, to astonish me, silly as it is; but I should never have believed that either you or your haughty young master would have dared to exhibit the least

[1] Le Siècle de Louis XIV, *Francheville.*

resentment towards me. Learn, all of you, valets and masters, little and great, that it was my pleasure to act as I did; that I need not, and that I will not, account for my actions to any one in the world, and particularly to bullies of your description. You play an extraordinary part for a personage of your rank; but whatever reasons determined you to write to me, I consider them too insignificant to trouble myself about it for an instant; I wish you to know, and to say to all who will hear it, that Christina cares very little about your court, and still less about yourself; and that in order to revenge my wrongs, I do not require to have recourse to your formidable power. My honour required what I have done; my will is a law which you ought to respect; and many people, for whom I have not more esteem than for yourself, ought to learn what they owe to their equals, before they make more noise than is becoming.

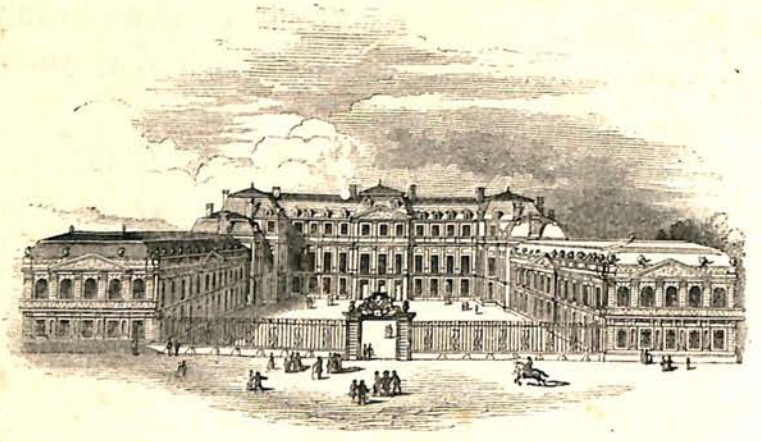
" Learn, finally, Mr. Cardinal, that Christina is a queen wherever she may be; and that in whatever place it is her pleasure to reside, the men, let them be as great imposters as they may, will still be superior to you and your confidants.

" The Prince de Condé was quite right to exclaim, when you inhumanly held him a prisoner at Vincennes; ' The old fox will never cease to insult those who do the state good service, unless the parliament either dismiss, or severely punish this illustrious St. Aquinus de Piscina.'

" Believe me therefore, Jules; conduct yourself in a manner to deserve my favour, which you cannot study too much to secure. God preserve you from ever risking the least indiscreet remark upon my person; for

although at the end of the earth, I shall be informed of your plots; I have friends and courtiers in my service, who are as clever and as far-sighted as yours, although they are worse paid.

" CHRISTINA."



CHAPTER VIII.

RECONCILIATION OF MONSIEUR AND MADEMOISELLE—HER RETURN TO COURT—INTERVIEW WITH ANNE OF AUSTRIA—PRESENTATION TO THE KING—PROJECT OF MARRIAGE BETWEEN MADEMOISELLE AND THE DUKE D'ANJOU—CHRISTINA AT COURT—INCREASING PASSION OF LOUIS XIV. FOR MARY DE MANCINI—UNEASINESS OF THE QUEEN—OVERTURES OF THE DUCHESS OF SAVOY—M. DE VÉRUE—THE LOTTERY OF THE CARDINAL—INSOLENCE OF MAZARIN TOWARDS ANNE OF AUSTRIA—INFLUENCE OF MARY DE MANCINI OVER THE MIND OF THE KING—THEIR LITERARY STUDIES—HISTORICAL MIS-STATEMENTS RELATIVE TO LOUIS XIV.—MARY DE MANCINI AND MOLIÈRE—OPPOSITION OF THE QUEEN—MOLIÈRE AT PARIS.

At this period Mademoiselle, who had succeeded in effecting a reconciliation with her father, after a formidable misunderstanding upon the subject of her property, of which, in delivering up his trust, he had made a violent effort to possess himself of a considerable portion; induced His Royal Highness to solicit her return to court, an application which met with immediate success; and her joy was great to hear from her friend the Count de Béthune, who had been the bearer of the letter, that both Their Majesties and the cardinal had expressed their satisfaction at the prospect of her reappearance; coupled with the injunction for her to proceed to

St. Cloud, where *Monsieur* would meet her, and there await the further directions of the minister; as the king was about to join the army, and it was necessary that she should delay her progress to La Fère[1] (where the court were then sojourning) until His Majesty's return, in order that one interview might suffice for the ceremony. Meanwhile, it greatly consoled the princess for this delay, to learn that every one was impatient to welcome her back to the royal circle; and that the Duke d'Anjou had declared he would resign his apartments to his cousin, until Mazarin had claimed that privilege, asserting that he was the proper person to do the honours of La Fère, being the governor of the castle.

At St. Cloud MADEMOISELLE found a number of the court nobles awaiting her, and among the rest Madame de Nemours, Madame d'Entragues, and all the particular friends of Mazarin, including the Princess de Carignan, and the Countess de Soissons. Enchanted by this unequivocal demonstration of his sincerity, she lost no time in writing not only to Their Majesties, to acknowledge in grateful terms the welcome which she had already received, but also to the cardinal himself; who, in acquainting M. de Béthune with the receipt of MADEMOISELLE's despatches, stated that he apprehended Her Royal Highness was not aware that the King of Sweden addressed him as "Your Eminence," as she had omitted to give him a title which had been freely

[1] La Fère is the principal town of the district of the Aisne, and is situated at six leagues from Laon. In the tenth century it was a fortified place; and in 1592 some famous conferences were held there, at which the Spaniards proposed to the League to place a Spanish princess upon the throne of France.

conceded by crowned heads; but that he was desirous to ascertain if the omission had been made intentionally.

This was a frightful dilemma for the punctilious princess, who dilates solemnly upon her embarrassment, as she had never yet accorded such an honour to any cardinal, and feared that by so doing in this case *Monsieur* might believe that she was humbled by her long exile. Her good angel M. de Béthune, however, came as usual to her assistance, by informing her that His Royal Highness himself conceded this title to the nephews of popes; and thus distinguisLed them from all others; an assurance which sufficed to satisfy the pride of MADEMOISELLE, who declared that as Mazarin was more useful, and of more consequence to her, than the nephew of any pope, she should not hesitate to confer it in her turn upon him; and in order to impress upon his mind that she had simply failed through ignorance, she hastened to address a second letter to him on the following day.

A short time subsequently intelligence arrived at St. Cloud that the court had left La Fère for Sedan,[1] in order to be nearer to Montmedy,[2] which was besieged by the Marshal de la Ferté,[3] and she was lamenting the fact

[1] A very ancient fortified town on the right bank of the Meuse, possessing on the S.E. a fortress in which Turenne was born. It was formerly the capital of a small sovereign principality, belonging to the family of La Tour d'Auvergne; but was ceded to France by the Duke de Bouillon in 1642.

[2] Montmedy is one of the two fortified towns of the department of the Meuse, and stands on the right bank of the Chiers. Its fortifications were constructed by Vauban. It was given up to France by the treaty of the Pyrenees in 1657.

[3] Henry de Sennecterre, Marshal de la Ferté, was the descendant of a very ancient Auvergnese family; and distinguished himself

as involving the delay of her return to court, when she received a communication from the cardinal, informing her that she was at liberty to proceed to Sedan whenever she pleased; only requesting that she would apprise him upon what day she should leave Paris and arrive at Rheims, in order that he might send her an escort.

Thus, overwhelmed with honours, she set forth; and when she reached the faubourg of Sedan, M. de Darnville was despatched to a meadow where the queen was walking, in order to ascertain when MADEMOISELLE might pay her respects, and returned with the answer that Her Majesty was awaiting her. She consequently hastened forward, surrounded by a guard of gendarmes and light-horse, amid a flourish of trumpets; and alighted from her carriage when she was within twenty paces of the queen; who met her with kindness, assuring her that she had always retained an affection for her person, even when she had felt angered by her actions; and that she freely forgave the affair of Orleans, although had the princess been in her power at the battle of the Porte St. Antoine, she could have strangled her; to which declaration MADEMOISELLE, with more courtliness than sincerity, replied, that she deserved such a punishment since she had incurred the displeasure of Her Majesty; but that it had been her misfortune to find herself among persons who had compelled her to act as she had done.

greatly at the siege of La Rochelle (1626), at the taking of Moyenvic and Trèves, and at the battle of Avesnes. Appointed Adjutant-General, he was conspicuous for his bravery at Rocroy and Sens, and defeated the Duke of Lorraine in 1650. When a marshal in 1651, he saved Nancy, and took Chasté, Mirecourt, Vandrevange Montmedy, and Gravelines (1651—58). He died in 1681, at the age of 82 years.

Anne of Austria then said that she had resolved to explain her feelings at once, and to declare what was in her heart; but that she should now dismiss the past from her memory, and never resume the subject; begging the princess to believe that thenceforward she should love her more than she had ever done. After this assurance, she presented to her the niece of the cardinal, Mary de Mancini, who was graciously received; and to whom MADEMOISELLE remarked that she was convinced when Mademoiselle de Mancini knew her she would love her; a fact of which, however, the king's new favourite was by no means convinced; for, well aware that the haughty princess had aspired to the hand of the king, she could not, without considerable uneasiness, witness her recal to court, although she was too politic to suffer such a feeling to appear.

After the reduction of Montmedy the king arrived at Sedan; and having travelled at speed was so covered with mud and dirt, that the queen, who was watching his approach from a window, was anxious that MADEMOISELLE should not see him before he had changed his dress; the princess, however, who was desirous to terminate as soon as possible the ceremonial of her forgiveness, declared with great earnestness that she could not suffer such a consideration to delay their meeting. She accordingly remained in the apartment, which the king almost immediately entered; and despite the disorder of his attire, his handsome person produced upon her the most favourable impression. As Louis approached, the queen took the hand of the princess, and leading her towards him, said with a smile: "Allow, me, Sir, to present to you a young lady who much regrets

her ill-conduct, and who will behave better in future." The king replied with a good-humoured laugh; the royal cousins exchanged an embrace; and then, as completely reconciled to all appearance as though one had never turned the cannon of the Bastille against the other, Louis gave a description of the siege, until the dinner-hour terminated the conversation.

The most agreeable feature of her return was, however, to MADEMOISELLE, the impression produced upon her mind by the marked attentions of the Duke d'Anjou, that the court contemplated her marriage with her young cousin; to which she declares that she was by no means averse, considering that a prince of the blood-royal, of handsome person, was a match worthy of her.[1]

Meanwhile, the extraordinary letter of Christina had produced its effect; for not feeling anxious to tilt against so uncompromising an antagonist, Mazarin had advised that she should be permitted to remain unmolested at Fontainebleau, and that no further comment should be made upon the tragedy at which she had presided; this she accordingly did for a couple of months longer; after which, wearying of the monotony of her solitary residence, she so unequivocally declared her intention to visit the court, and to share in its gaieties, that the king found himself compelled, in order to render such an arrangement as little embarrassing as possible to all parties, to send her an invitation to attend a ballet which he was about to give in honour of Mary de Mancini, and in which he was himself to dance.

So alarmed was Mazarin, however, lest she should

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

take up her abode in Paris, that in order to impress upon her the extent of the inconvenience to which he was subjected by her advent, and how little it was anticipated that she would prolong her visit, he gave up his apartments as her temporary residence.

The whole winter was spent in festivals, lotteries, and masquerades, from which the king absented himself whenever Mary de Mancini did not appear; or devoted himself entirely to her, enchanted by her wit, her intellect, and, above all, her unconcealed affection for himself. His attachment was too palpable to escape the lynx-eyed courtiers, who looked with considerable apprehension on its rapid progress; for the strong good sense and quick discernment of Mary were so well known, that all those whose ambition led them to desire the overthrow of the minister, in order that they might in their turn exert an influence over the mind of the king, were aware that chance could not have opposed to them a more formidable adversary than this young girl; who, in addition to her mental superiority, was daily acquiring new beauty.

Happy, hopeful, and honoured, Mary's eye became brighter, her complexion more vivid, and her step more elastic; while the singular melody of her voice appeared to give an added and a potent power to the words of womanly wisdom which flowed as if instinctively from her lips. All the previous passions of Louis had merely afforded subject for a jest, for none of them had interfered with the interests of those about him: vanity on the part of the king, and gratified ambition on that of the young beauties whom he had distinguished, were the frail bonds by which they were temporarily linked together; and so unstable a tie could produce no moral

effect calculated to excite apprehension; but the case was now widely different. Habituated to the servility and sycophancy of a time-serving crowd; where even the hearts over which he aspired to reign were subjected to the iron pressure of expediency, eyes had hitherto brightened, and lips smiled beneath his flattery, as policy, or family interests, or personal ambition dictated; and Louis had been equally deceived in believing that he loved, and was beloved. Not one of these fair flutterers had acquired the most remote power over his mind; not one had been enabled to make him feel his deficiencies, or to incite him to higher and nobler aspirations than those of a mere sensual existence; while the words of the deep-thoughted and strongly-loving woman by whom he was now absorbed, awakened him to higher and more worthy views and desires.

Anne of Austria, who had scarcely yet overcome her uneasiness at the preference of the king for the Countess de Soissons, which she had, as she flattered herself, terminated by the marriage of the lady; and his subsequent inclination for Mademoiselle d'Argencourt, which had been concluded by a cloister; now found herself plunged once more into a state of alarm, far better founded, and more rational than ever. The coquetry and vanity of the countess had, in the one instance, acted as her allies; while the real or imputed treachery of the young lady of honour had still more unequivocally assisted her views in the other. But neither vanity, coquetry, nor treachery, were to be anticipated from a woman who was alike careless and unconscious of her own attractions; and who loved, with all the enthusiasm of a devoted heart, not the monarch before whom every knee bent and every head was bowed, but the man whom

she had invested with an excellence that she worshipped with her whole soul.

The queen did sufficient justice to the high and earnest qualities of Mary de Mancini to feel this truth deeply; but Louis was no longer the mere stripling who might be checked by a frown, or controlled by a menace; and she soon discovered that the marked coldness and neglect with which she affected to treat the niece of the cardinal, only produced an increase of tenderness and deference on the part of the king himself, that evidently consoled Mary for a change which she simply considered as a caprice at once unjust and inexplicable. Satisfied in the present, without care or thought for the future, anxious only to see the idol of her heart equal in all respects to the vision of her own fancy, and pre-eminent in all manly virtues and dignity as he was in rank; she moved amid an atmosphere of light and love which blinded her to the clouds and vapours that were gathering about her path.

A word, a hint, from the cardinal must have sufficed to awaken her from this bright dream; but the cardinal uttered neither word nor hint; and while the marriage of the king was his constant theme, he either did not see, or affected not to remark, the strong attachment which had grown up between the young monarch and his niece; and which could, in her case, only result in a regal diadem or a broken heart. Neither, as we have before remarked, did he evince the zeal in his actions which he exhibited in his speech. He proceeded, as he said, cautiously; but, as Anne of Austria was shrewd enough to perceive, languidly and even with reluctance, in the marriage; and she no sooner became convinced of the fact, as well as suspicious of its

motive, than she exerted all her influence to bring the alliance to a termination; while although her ambition for her son, as well as her natural affection for her family, led her to desire an alliance with the daughter of Charles V, she still learnt with undisguised satisfaction that the Duchess of Savoy had communicated to the cardinal her desire to see the Princess Marguerite the wife of the French king. Like himself she was a descendant of Henry IV, and was allied to Mazarin through the Count de Soissons; a fact which, in default of allying his niece to Louis, must render the marriage most desirable as regarded his own interests; and strong in this conviction, she had despatched a confidential person to Paris, ostensibly to solicit the hand of the sister of MADEMOISELLE for the young Duke of Savoy; but actually to treat secretly with the minister for the marriage of the king with the Princess Marguerite.

The former negotiation was not destined to succeed, the cardinal having declared that he would offer no opinion upon the subject, as should he advise *Monsieur* to conclude a marriage between his daughter and the Duke of Savoy, he might imagine that he desired to prevent her union with the king; although it was his sincere belief that His Royal Highness could not take a more prudent step, this being the most desirable match in Europe, while he was convinced that Louis XIV. had no affection for his cousin; but that he should absolutely refrain from tendering any advice; an excess of forbearance which was unhesitatingly attributed to his latent hope of seeing his niece Mary seated upon the French throne.

Finally, *Monsieur* declined the alliance, desiring the envoy to assure the Duchess of Savoy that he deeply

felt the honour which she had done him, but that he could not suffer his daughter to marry while the king remained single. A reply which startled Anne of Austria, and excited her utmost indignation.

The envoy, who was a young Piedmontese count, was himself meanwhile no slight object of curiosity to the court; not only from his favour with the ducal family, but also from the fact that he had been deeply enamoured of the beautiful Marquise de Calux; whose death by small-pox had affected him so deeply that, some time after her decease, he caused her coffin to be opened, and although the work of corruption was already rapidly progressing, remained beside her body above an hour, with his lips fastened upon one of her livid arms.[1]

M. de Vérue found a ready welcome from Mazarin; who, before his return to Turin, in order to impress him with an exalted idea of the magnificence of the nation with which his sovereign was anxious to form an alliance, gave a grand banquet, which was attended by the king, the queen-mother, the Duke d'Anjou, the Queen and Princess of England, MADEMOISELLE, and all the leading members of the court; and at this *fête*, despite the gravity of the prelate's rank and profession, the amusements terminated with a ball and supper; as the king never approved any festival at which he could not dance, while Anne of Austria was equally stringent on the subject of her card-table. Before the commencement of the ball, the cardinal conducted his royal and noble guests into a gallery filled with objects of art, precious gems and stuffs, Chinese wonders, and every description of costly toys, of which he had prepared a lottery, whose

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

every ticket was a prize; and whence a cornet of gendarmes carried away a diamond ornament valued at four thousand crowns, and MADEMOISELLE another, estimated at the same number of livres.

This extraordinary magnificence, which had involved an outlay of between four and five hundred thousand livres, displayed by a minister who had arrived in France penniless, and which could consequently only be the result of excessive national depredations, did not pass without severe comment on the part of the excluded; who, having no share in the profitable festivities, felt themselves at liberty to draw such deductions as they saw fit; but its success at court was so great that the king on several occasions imitated the example of the minister, to the benefit of the reigning favourite.

As regarded his acknowledged mission, M. de Vérue, however, quitted the court unsuccessful; but he had sped somewhat better in his secret undertaking, although nothing had been definitively decided; and meanwhile, as we have already stated, the cardinal was so well aware that all authority was gradually passing away from the queen, that he exerted all his subtlety to possess himself of the confidence and attachment of Louis, disregarding the mortification and displeasure which he generated by this change in the bosom of Anne of Austria; and even so far exhibiting his indifference to the fact, as to permit himself publicly to remark that she was deficient in good sense, and displayed more attachment to the house of Austria than to that of which by her marriage she had become a member; that the late king had been

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

justified in the dislike and suspicion which he had exhibited towards her; and that her affected devotion was a mere matter of policy, as she had no taste for anything save the pleasures of the table, and cared little for aught beyond them.[1]

All these insulting speeches were, as a natural consequence, repeated to the queen herself, and considerably augmented her alarm. Trammelled as she was by her marriage with Mazarin, expostulation was useless; nor would she condescend to employ it. She therefore summoned a secret assembly of the most distinguished councillors of state and eminent advocates, to ascertain whether, in the event of the king's marriage without her consent, it would be a valid one. The unanimous decision was in the negative; and M. de Brienne, who had been constantly in her confidence, was entrusted with the important task of drawing up this act, and promised that he would cause it to be registered with closed doors by the parliament, in the event of a secret alliance between the king and Mary de Mancini.

Meanwhile, unconscious of the machinations of those about them, the lovers lived on in a paradise of their own creation, which was only darkened to the devoted girl by a constant recurrence of the fearful subject of the king's marriage. Some of the historians of the period have accused Mary of an ambitious desire to become Queen of France; but others have rendered her more noble justice, and given her credit for being entirely absorbed by a passion which, despite the unpromising atmosphere amid which it was indulged, was at once too absorbing and too romantic to involve one

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

thought of self. Certain it is, that even had she entertained so lofty an aspiration she might fairly have been forgiven under the circumstances, for she was aware that her sister Olympia and the Duchess de Châtillon had both flattered themselves for a time that they should succeed in the same project; and that, too, at a period when Louis was under a stringent control, which he had since in a great degree flung off. But the whole anxiety of Mary appeared to centre in her earnest desire to raise the tastes and the ambition of her royal lover; and to incite him to overcome, through the strength of his natural abilities, which she at once recognised to be great, the defects of his early education. To Mary de Mancini it was that Louis XIV. was indebted for his first appreciation of art and literature, and an acquaintance with the names of those men who were destined to illustrate his reign. Nothing can more clearly demonstrate this truth than the fact that Madame de Montespan, on her domestication in the "private apartments," makes the following statement.

"The king had made under his preceptor Péréfixe merely superficial studies; because that prelate, by the express command of the queen-mother, had principally attended to the health of his pupil, whom she wished should, above all things, possess a good constitution. 'The rest is easily acquired, where a prince has a proper appreciation of his duties, and an elevated mind,' was her frequent remark, and one which has been verified. I found a great number of Spanish and Italian books in the library of the private apartments; the *Pastor Fido*, the *Aminta*, and the *Jerusalem Delivered*, appeared to me to have hitherto been the favourite works. After those came the letters of Voiture, the compositions

of Malherbe[1] and Balzac,[2] the fables of La Fontaine,[3] the satires of Boileau,[4] and the pretty comedies

[1] Francis de Malherbe, a celebrated French poet, was born at Caen about 1556, of a noble and ancient family. He settled himself in Provence, where he became attached to the household of Henry of Angoulême, the natural son of Henry II, and married a young lady of the house of Coriolis. Henry IV. granted him a pension. He is considered as the father of French poetry, of which he settled the rules. He was the first who elevated the genius of the language to the sublime, and to the majesty of the ode. His poetical works comprise odes, stanzas, sonnets, epigrams, songs, &c.; and, besides these, he left behind him a translation of several of the letters of Seneca, and another of the thirty-third book of the Roman History of Titus Livius. He died in 1620.

[2] John Louis Guez de Balzac was born at Angoulême in 1594. An elegant writer, and member of the French academy, he was one of the reformers of the language. Besides his *Literary Dissertations* he published several treatises, such as *Aristippa, The Barbon, The Prince,* and the *Christian Socrates;* but he owes his reputation principally to his collected *Letters.* He died in 1655.

[3] John de la Fontaine, the famous fabulist, was a native of Château Thierry, where he was born in 1621. He was an indifferent scholar, but upon reading the Ode of Malherbe on the death of Henry IV, his talents became apparent to himself; and he forthwith applied himself to the study of Horace, Homer, Virgil, Terence, Plutarch, and Plato; after which he wrote his poem of *Adonis,* and his witty but licentious *Stories,* principally versified upon the tales of the *Decameron.* He owes his reputation, however, to his *Fables;* although he also produced several other poems, such as *Psyche,* the *Quinquina,* and some operas. La Fontaine, throughout his life, devoted himself to pleasure, and was always embarrassed and needy. He died in 1695.

[4] Nicholas Boileau Despréaux, the celebrated critic, was born at Paris in the year 1636. His *Art of Poetry,* his *Epistles,* and his *Satires,* caused him to be called the master of Parnassus. He was occasionally illiberal in his judgments, but his natural disposition was nevertheless kind and generous. He was the friend of Racine, Molière, and La Fontaine. Louis XIV. appointed him his historiographer, conjointly with Racine, and settled upon him a pension of 2000 livres. Boileau was the author of the comic-heroic poem in six cantos, of *The Reading Desk;* and the translator of the *Treaty on the Sublime* of Longinus. He died in 1711.

of Molière.[1] The tragedies of Corneille had been read also, but not frequently.

"Until my arrival at court, I had considered Peter Corneille as the first tragic dramatist in the world, and as the first both of our poets and writers. The king convinced me of my error. Book in hand he directed my attention to innumerable faults of expression, incoherent images, outrageous conceits, and sentiments almost always exaggerated and out of nature. * * La Fontaine pleased him more, on account of his intuitive ingenuousness. * * He declared him to possess wit without artifice, poetry without fallacies, satire without bitterness, gaiety always well-timed, a great knowledge of the human heart, and a perpetual satire, from which he excluded neither the great nor merry."

"With Boileau he was pleased, he said, as with a necessary scourge, which could be opposed to inferior writers and to bad taste; that his satires, which were too personal, and consequently illiberal, he disapproved; but that, as he was aware of this, he would correct the habit in spite of himself; that he was engaged upon an *Art of Poetry*, after Horace, and that the little which he had read to him of his poem, led him to anticipate an important work, as the French language would improve by the aid of writings of this description; and that Boileau,

[1] Jean Baptiste Poquelin, *alias* Molière, the celebrated comic dramatist, was a Parisian, whose father occupied the situation of court upholsterer. He was born in 1620, and received his education under the Jesuits; but, carried away by his love of the drama, he disregarded the wishes of his family, and in the pursuit of his double profession of author and actor, became the favourite of Louis XIV, who gave him a pension of 1000 livres; and ultimately acquired the world-wide reputation which he now enjoys. He died in 1673.

merciless as he was, would immensely benefit those who followed the profession of letters."[1]

Thus it is fully evident that it was not to the "wit of the Mortemarts," celebrated as it was, that Louis owed his still limited, but nevertheless graceful, acquaintance with the most famous writers of his time; while it is equally certain that the gentle and devoted La Vallière, however well she loved the king during her interval of favour, was by no means calculated to obtain the same supremacy over his mind which she temporarily held over his heart; and that the more enlightened among the courtiers by whom he was surrounded, were little likely to incur the loss of his favour by hinting at his mental deficiencies, even had they not been, moreover, aware that by such a line of conduct they must inevitably draw down upon themselves the enmity of the cardinal. On the other hand, it is however certain that posterity has, by some extraordinary chance, attributed to Louis XIV. an excess of ignorance, under which circumstances remain to prove that it was impossible he should have laboured. Thus, for example, we read in an old and well-established English author:—

"I have been well assured that the illiterature of this grand monarque went so far, that to the last he could hardly write his name. He formed it out of six straight strokes, and a line of beauty, which, first stood thus, IIIIIIS; these he afterwards perfected, as well as he was able. The second form was LOUIS."[2]

That this account has been given under a strange misconception, is made manifest by the document still in

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Montespan.

[2] Anecdotes of the English Language, &c., by Samuel Pegge, Esq. F.S.A. 3d edit. Edited by the Rev. Henry Christmas, M.A. &c.

existence in the original, where he authorized the arrest of the Cardinal de Retz in the December of 1652; of which the body is in the autograph of le Tellier, the secretary of state, and where he added in his own hand the injunction that the prelate should be secured living or dead. Louis was then only in his fourteenth year; and although the writing is stiff and ungraceful, it was even at that time very superior to that of many of his court, M. de Retz included; and fully equal to that of nine-tenths of the French striplings of his age even in the present day. His correspondence with Mary de Mancini, moreover, exonerates him from the reproof of the utter ignorance which has been attributed to him; while there can be no doubt that the very epistolary commerce in question tended greatly to enlarge his mind, to elevate his ideas, and to purify his taste. In one instance we can trace this fact to its germ.

It was to Mary de Mancini that France was indebted for an early recognition of her immortal comic dramatist, Molière; with whose extraordinary talent she first became acquainted through the medium of her cousin the Prince de Conti,[1] whom she was one day reproaching for his long and unaccountable absence in Languedoc; and who confessed to her that he had been lingering at Béziers, in order to enjoy the rich comic treat afforded by a company of strolling players, whose manager proved to be a certain Jean Baptiste Poquelin, his ancient class-fellow at the Jesuit College; whom he had only expected to meet again as the successor to his father's post in the king's household.

[1] It will be remembered that the Prince de Conti had married Anna Maria Martinozzi, one of the elder nieces of the cardinal.

The account given by the prince of this marvellous genius, excited the enthusiasm of Mary, who forthwith desired to see him, and said that he must come to Paris; to which M. de Conti replied, that he had himself been compelled to yield to the force of a talent which he had at first felt tempted to regret in a man in the position of Molière; and had, for a time, urged him to abandon so equivocal a career; while in order to induce him to do this, he had even offered to make him his private secretary,[1] leaving him free to write for the stage; but finding that his inclination for his present profession was too decided to admit of his embracing any other, he had promised to forward his fortunes whenever an opportunity might occur to befriend him; though he dared not mention him to the king, as he felt convinced that the comedians of the hôtel de Burgoyne would revolt against the rivalry of a mere provincial company; and that poor Molière would only experience a bitter mortification, should he be compelled after such an attempt to quit the capital.

Mademoiselle de Mancini was not, however, to be deterred by this apprehension; but assured the prince that he might at once summon his *protégé* to Paris, where she would guarantee his establishment; and on the evening of the very day upon which this conversation took place, she informed M. de Conti that the king had given orders to his first gentleman of the chamber to send for Molière and his company.

It was in vain that the queen, who took a great interest in the performers of the hôtel de Burgoyne, represented that the new actors could not appear in the capital, as there was no theatre in which they could represent their

[1] Vie de Molière, par M. Petitot.

comedies; the objection was no sooner advanced than Louis ordered a stage to be erected in the guard-room of the old Louvre. On the arrival of Molière at Paris, the Prince de Conti presented him to the Duke d'Anjou, requesting for him his protection; and the young prince, delighted at once to have a company of his own, and to have discovered a new source of amusement, received him most graciously; and by permission of the king, who readily entered into his views, authorized him and his troop to assume the appellation of "The Company of *Monsieur*," to the extreme annoyance of the rival establishment.

On their first appearance the new performers found themselves honoured by the attendance of the whole court; and, moreover, discovered among their audience all the actors of the hôtel de Bourgoyne, who had hastened to satisfy themselves of the extent of the danger to which they were exposed by this unexpected invasion of their privileges. Molière, who, like many other comedians, flattered himself that he had a great talent for tragedy, made his debût in the *Nicodemus* of Corneille; and, according to the chronicles of the times, presented a very absurd figure. He redeemed himself, however, by the introduction at the close of the principal piece, of an entreaty for permission to "contribute to the amusement of the greatest monarch in the world, who had caused him and his followers to forget, in their eagerness to entertain him, that His Majesty had in his service excellent originals, of which they were only inefficient copies," by playing before him one of those light interludes which had acquired for them a certain reputation in the provinces.

This compliment to the artists of the hôtel de Bourgoyne excited great applause; and the company, autho-

rized by the assent of the king, enacted the *Docteur Amoureux*,[1] which delighted the courtly audience by its playfulness and wit; and thenceforward the custom was resumed of giving a farce after the principal drama.

The king, enchanted with this new acquisition, immediately desired Molière to establish himself in the capital; and gave up to him the hall of the Petit-Bourbon, which at that period occupied the space upon which the colonnade of the Louvre now stands; and had been previously ceded to the Italian company that the cardinal had brought to Paris, who continued to play there with him on alternate nights. His success was, however, so unequivocal, that he soon incurred the jealousy of the actors of the hôtel de Bourgoyne; and two years subsequently, when the Petit-Bourbon was demolished in order to give place to the new erections, he obtained a grant of the theatre of the Palais-Royal, which had been fitted up at an immense outlay by the Cardinal de Richelieu.[2]

[1] Vie de Molière, par Voltaire. [2] Vie de Molière, par Petitot.

CHAPTER IX.

SUCCESS OF MOLIÈRE—ANXIETY OF THE QUEEN FOR THE KING'S MARRIAGE—HOPES OF MAZARIN—FIRM OPPOSITION OF ANNE OF AUSTRIA—TREASON OF MARSHAL D'HOQUINCOURT—SUBMISSION OF THE DUKE DE BEAUFORT—THE KING BEFORE HESDIN—PRECAUTIONS OF MAZARIN—SERIOUS ILLNESS OF THE KING—MAZARIN CONCEALS HIS WEALTH—A CABAL—MADAME DE FIENNE IN THE KING'S ANTE-CHAMBER—RECOVERY OF THE KING—MARY DE MANCINI IN THE SICK ROOM—EXILE OF THE CONSPIRATORS—JOURNEY OF THE COURT TO LYONS—MEETING OF THE COURTS OF FRANCE AND SAVOY—THE PRINCESS MARGUERITE—COLDNESS OF THE ROYAL SUITOR—THE DUKE OF SAVOY—DETERMINATION OF THE KING OF SPAIN—THE HAND OF THE INFANTA OFFERED TO LOUIS XIV.—DEPARTURE OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY—REJECTION OF THE PRINCESS MARGUERITE—DEPARTURE OF MADAME ROYALE AND HER DAUGHTER.

THENCEFORWARD the admirable dramatist progressed from triumph to triumph; while the impotent satires which were launched against him from the rival establishment, and which were wanting in the raciness that distinguished his own productions, rather tended to enhance than to detract from his increasing reputation.

Meanwhile, Anne of Austria could not suppress her alarm on perceiving that no amusement, however novel or exciting, could for an instant divert the affections of the king from Mary de Mancini; and while she resolved to conceal her uneasiness upon the subject from the cardinal, she, nevertheless, continued to urge him to greater exertion in the negotiations for the royal marriage; and was painfully startled upon one occasion, when she had been expressing her anxiety for the establishment of her son, to hear him allude with a laugh to the report which had been promulgated that Louis XIV. contemplated a private marriage with his niece; whom he declared must be weak indeed should she place any faith in the pledges of a sovereign of twenty years of age; but he nevertheless jested at the idea in a tone which, to the excited fears of the queen, appeared rather meant to elicit her own sentiments than to condemn the ambition of Mary; and she accordingly hastened to reply coldly and haughtily, that she could not believe the king would be capable of so unbecoming an act; but that, were it possible he could entertain such a thought, she warned His Eminence that the whole of France would revolt against both him and his minister; while she would herself head the rebellion, and induce the Duke d'Anjou to imitate her.

It is asserted that Mazarin never forgave these bitter and determined words; but he was, nevertheless, wise enough to conceal his real feeling, and to protest his determination to separate the lovers by any means, however violent. Nor was it long ere he consoled himself by the conviction that he required no queen of his own blood to uphold his power; and that, in all probability,

the resolute nature of Mary, coupled with the influence which she possessed over the king, might ultimately have tended rather to overthrow his authority than to sustain it.

Not satisfied, however, with the declaration which she had made, the queen a few days afterwards caused the protestation of the parliament to be communicated to the cardinal; who thenceforth found himself compelled to abandon the ambitious hope which he had ventured to encourage; and determined to renew his attempt to procure for Louis the hand of the Infanta of Spain, even while pursuing his negotiations with the Court of Savoy, that, in the event of the failure of either, the other alliance might be accomplished; each being alike, although not equally, advantageous to France; for while a marriage with the Princess Marguerite would afford the means of continuing the war, that with the Infanta was a sure method of securing peace.

Early in the ensuing year preparations were commenced for continuing the campaign, which on this occasion opened by an act of treason. The Marshal d'Hoquincourt was discovered to have entered into a treaty with Condé, and made an engagement to deliver up Péronne; to which dishonourable compact he was said to have been seduced by the bright eyes of Madame de Châtillon; who after having numbered among her adorers, not only the king himself, but also the Duke de Nemours, and the Prince de Condé, had amused the leisure of her exile by captivating the Marshal, who had been unable to resist her fascinations, to which he had sacrificed his honour. The plot was, however, discovered before it had time to take effect; and the Marshal was superseded in his command; but the

dereliction of M. d'Hoquincourt was soon more fatally punished, for having joined the enemy's forces and advanced to reconnoitre the lines at the siege of Dunkirk, he received a mortal wound; and expired declaring his sincere regret for his fault; and requesting as a last favour from the king that he might be interred at Notre Dame de Liesse; a request which was at once conceded.

In consequence of this circumstance it was decided that Louis should join the army shortly after Lent; and, on the eve of his departure, the Duke de Beaufort, the *King of the Markets*, the champion of the people, the rabid enemy of the cardinal, and the rebel who had braved the throne, bent his knee in submission before the powers he had defied; and thus left only The Prince and the Cardinal de Retz the declared foes of the monarchy.

To Louis his renewed allegiance was welcome, for the duke had compelled his respect by his dignified and firm bearing during his exile; and by the fact that he had never condescended to adopt any unworthy measures to shorten its duration; while to Mazarin it was equally acceptable, as he saw in him only the brother of his nephew, the Duke de Mercœur, and he was consequently anxious to number him among his friends; to effect which object he bestowed upon him, on his reconciliation with the court, the survivorship of the admiralty which his father, the Duke de Vendôme, had held during the war.[1]

On Easter Monday, the necessary preparations being completed, the king left Paris, and, accompanied by the cardinal, presented himself in person against Hesdin,

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

which had just declared for Condé; but finding that there was no hope of taking the town, Mazarin, being unwilling that Louis should be subjected to the humiliation of a defeat, resolved at once to proceed to Calais, in order to prepare for the capture of Dunkirk; in furtherance of which project, with a view of intimidating Spain, he had formed the alliance with Cromwell.

During the absence of the king with the army, the Duke d'Anjou, instead of accompanying him thither, remained with the queen-mother, who continued to pass her life as usual between the church and the card-table; while her son amused himself by walking with her maids of honour on the sea-shore at Calais, where the court were then residing, and by immersing those around him in the salt water; as well as in purchasing ribbons and stuffs from England, of which the import had considerably augmented since the recognition of the Protector; who, during the visit of the court to Calais, sent Lord Falconbridge to present his respects to Their Majesties, which he accompanied by a present of some fine horses to the king, the Duke d'Anjou, and the cardinal.[1]

Dunkirk fell into the power of the royalist troops on the 14th of June; but the rejoicings consequent upon the event were abruptly terminated by the sudden indisposition of the king, who was attacked by scarlet fever so violently as to cause considerable apprehension for his life. In this emergency Louis gained the soothing conviction that a portion at least of the homage which he received came from the hearts of those who tendered it. The queen at once announced her inten-

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

tion of retiring to Val-de-Grâce, in the event of his death; and his brother refused to leave his bed-side, although assured that the disease was contagious; while Mary de Mancini, who was forbidden the entrance of his chamber, spent hours of anguish, which were only solaced by the messages that passed between the royal invalid and herself through the medium of a confidential attendant. The Count de Guiche and the Prince de Marsillac were his constant companions; and, encouraged by their devotion, the young sovereign exerted himself to contend against the suffering by which he was prostrated alike in body and in mind.

This sympathy was, however, by no means general. Individual interests were involved in his danger, which proved more powerful than attachment to his person; and the example of worldly prudence was set by the cardinal himself; who, on the tenth day after the king's attack, aware that he had nothing to hope from the Duke d'Anjou, dismantled his apartments of all their precious contents, and during the night despatched his statues, his paintings, and his money to Vincennes, with an order that they should be deposited in one of the vaults of the fortress; after which he made advances to the Marshal Duplessis, the governor of the prince, and to the Count de Guiche, his favourite, in the hope of making better terms with *Monsieur*, should the evil which was anticipated indeed take place.[1]

During this time the saloon that joined the sick-chamber, which, only a day or two previously, scarce sufficed to contain the throng of courtiers by which it

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Motteville.

was crowded, became almost deserted. The hourly bulletin, which was posted above the fireplace, attracted from time to time the anxious eye of a noble, but the visit was a brief one; for the atmosphere breathed of contagion, and there were, as we have shown, few indeed at court who were willing to subject themselves to its influence. The most constant attendant there was Madame de Fienne, the friend and confidant of Madame de Choisy,[1] who were both at the head of what was called the *cabal of Monsieur;* although there is every reason to believe that the young prince was utterly ignorant of the existence of any such party, as no action or expression had at this period betrayed the slightest desire on his part to inherit a crown, which, with all his amiable qualities, he was ill-calculated to wear with dignity; and which his aversion to every species of exertion, and his decided love of pleasure, would have rendered to him rather a trammel than a boon.

But if Philip experienced no desire to place himself upon the throne, his favourites were by no means so careless in his behalf. Easy, supple, and indolent as he was, tardy in taking offence, readily conciliated, and ever willing to repay a new pleasure by a new concession, they flattered themselves that they should govern under the ægis of his name; and already many of them were repining that Louis should linger so long upon what they presumed to be his death-bed, and thus delay the wished-for moment when they would be enabled to salute his brother as the King of France.

It was with the hope that she might chance to be the

[1] The wife of the ex-chancellor of Gaston of Orleans, and mother of the Abbé de Choisy, the author of the *Memoirs.*

first to do this, that Madame de Fienne, on the pretext of an overwhelming anxiety for the young sovereign, came every hour throughout the day and night to the saloon already named, and watched, stretched along the ground, under the door of his chamber, to pry into the proceedings within. One night the king's nurse, chancing suddenly to leave the room, detected this over-zeal, of which she hastened to inform the queen; who, naturally incensed at such a proceeding, rose from her seat, declaring that the intruder should forthwith be flung out of the window. Fortunately, however, both for the safety of Madame de Fienne, and the dignity of Anne of Austria, the Duke de Créqui,[1] who chanced to be present, held her back, and afforded the offending party time to escape.[2]

Nor was this lady the only delinquent; for it was soon ascertained that, during the extremity of the king, Madame de Choisy had written to the Duke d'Anjou certain circumstances relating both to the queen and the cardinal, with a freedom highly unbecoming and offensive; while, at the same time, M. de Brissac, (who had only recently received permission to return to Paris in order that he might be treated for a lingering and dangerous disease under which he had been labouring,) as well as M. de Jerzé, were intriguing with Madame de Choisy to secure the liberation of the Cardinal de Retz, which they hoped to obtain through her influence over the mind of the Duke d'Anjou.

Meanwhile, all was dismay and despair in the sick-chamber of the young king; the sacraments had been administered to him without eliciting one token of con-

[1] Charles de Créqui, Prince de Poix, governor of Paris, and ambassador to Rome in 1662. He died in 1687.

[2] Siècle de Louis XIV. *Voltaire.*

sciousness; and the priests, superseding the courtiers in his private apartments, were chanting their funereal anthems in saloons from which the decorations of the last festival had not yet been removed. His final recovery is indeed attributed to an empiric, who, learning that the court physicians had renounced all hope of saving his life, was furtively introduced to his bedside by Mary de Mancini and his nurse; and who, after having examined him with great attention, seated himself familiarly on the bed, exclaiming; "The lad is very ill, but he will not die of it."[1]

The prediction was verified: the directions of this singular physician were scrupulously obeyed; and the young king, who had been about to exchange the brilliant throne of the Louvre for the sombre vaults of St. Denis, rapidly progressed towards convalescence; and so soon as it was ascertained beyond all doubt that the danger was at an end, the queen directed the Prince de Marsillac to wait upon the Duke d'Anjou, and communicate the joyful intelligence; a mission in which the Duke de la Rochefoucauld entreated that he might join his son; to which request the queen consented, on condition that while the prince was delivering his message, the duke should carefully watch the countenances of Madame de Choisy and Madame de Fienne, and report to her the effect produced by so unexpected a piece of intelligence.

No commission could have been more acceptable to the caustic disposition of M. de la Rochefoucauld, who loved to study human nature under all its phases; and who had "ample room and verge enough" in the scene which was

[1] Siècle de Louis XIV. *Voltaire.*

so soon before his eyes; for with the exception of the Duke d'Anjou himself, whose expressions of delight were earnest and genuine, every individual by whom he was surrounded received the intelligence as the undoubted herald of his own disgrace; so certain did they esteem it, that even the least imprudent among them would be exiled under the legitimate indignation of the queen-mother; while not the slightest gratification which the Duke de la Rochefoucould derived from the errand upon which he had been sent, was yielded by the opportunity which it afforded of expatiating to the pale and terror-stricken audience about him on all the details of the miraculous cure which had preserved the young sovereign to the love of his faithful subjects.

Couriers were immediately despatched to Paris, and into all the provinces, to announce the happy event; and meanwhile Louis, prostrated by the voluptuous languor which so constantly succeeds violent and dangerous illness, found his best and most welcome resource in the conversation and care of Mary de Mancini; who seized so favourable an opportunity of introducing him to the literature of France and Italy, the delights of poetry, and the engrossing subject of history. "He amused himself by reading entertaining books during that period of leisure;" says the author of the *Siècle de Louis XIV;* "and particularly in reading them with the wife of the constable,[1] who, like her sisters, was full of intellect. He was partial to verses and romances, which, depicting gallantry and heroism, secretly flattered his propensities. . . . The person who directed his education under the Marshal

[1] Mary de Mancini, afterwards married to the Constable Colonna.

de Villeroi his governor, was what it behoved him to be, learned and amiable; but the civil wars militated against his education; and the Cardinal Mazarin was willing that the king should not be enlightened. When he attached himself to Mary de Mancini, he learnt Italian with facility for her sake."

Meanwhile the cardinal, who by no means approved of these perpetual studies, broke in upon them at every opportunity with the gossipry of the court circle, which was always sure to amuse the queen; but to which the royal convalescent lent slight attention, although he was induced by these means to sign an order of exile against M. and Madame de Brissac,[1] the Marquis de Jerzé, the President Perot, (who was in the interests of the Prince de Condé,) and the Countess de Fienne; while the queen herself despatched a courier to Madame de Choisy, to inform her that as she was deeply involved in the misconduct of Madame de Fienne, she must at once retire to one of her estates in Normandy; an order which she received with uncontrolled mortification.

Immediately that the convalescence of the king admitted of such a measure, he was removed from Calais to Compiègne, and thence, after a short interval, to Paris; where his attachment to Mary de Mancini becoming every day more undisguised, the queen resolved upon hastening the journey to Lyons, which had been decided on early in the spring; and which had at once a declared and a hidden object. Its ostensible purpose was to bring the king into contact with the Princess Marguerite of Savoy, who was still talked of as the future

[1] Gabrielle Louise de St. Simon, Duchess de Brissac, sister of the Duke de St. Simon, author of the celebrated *Memoirs*.

queen of France; while its real intention was, by so decided a step, to urge the King of Spain to concede the hand of his daughter to his sister's son.

While this affair was pending, news arrived of the severe illness of the Prince de Condé, who was confined to his bed at Brussels; when the cardinal, who never forgot that he was of the blood-royal, and nearly connected with himself through the marriage of M. de Conti, eagerly seized this opportunity to effect a reconciliation; and forthwith despatched his own physician to the assistance of the invalid; who, thanks to his care, was soon declared convalescent.

The time which still remained before the court could leave Paris, was constantly occupied in festivities of every description, of which Mary de Mancini continued to be the principal object to the king; but her heart was heavy, and tears rose unbidden to accompany her smiles. She knew the errand upon which Louis was bound; and she shuddered as she acknowledged to herself, that the peal which rang out in honour of his bridal, must sound the knell of her own happiness. She made an earnest effort in consequence to avoid the necessity of following the queen on this, to her, ill-omened journey; but Anne of Austria was obdurate, gilding her cruelty with the assurance that she could ill spare the presence of Mademoiselle de Mancini, when she was anxious to impress Madame Royale with a high idea of the magnificence and beauty of her court.

The Abbé d'Ambreti, who had negotiated the affair for the Duchess of Savoy, left Paris some time before the royal party, in order to apprise his mistress of the

period of their departure, it having been arranged that she should quit Turin on the same day; but his entreaties that he might carry with him a positive assent to the marriage, were only met by the reply that should the king, on seeing the Princess Marguerite, decide in favour of the alliance, it would take place, but that no pledge could be given; and with this indefinite answer he was compelled to take his leave.

During the journey Louis was in the most joyous spirits, and talked of his marriage with an interest which wrung the heart of Mary; although when at times, tempted by the fineness of the weather, he performed a portion of it on horseback, accompanied by MADEMOISELLE, some of the queen's ladies, and herself, he constantly rode by her side, and conversed with her with the utmost tenderness.[1] At Dijon the court halted, in consequence of a convocation of the Chambers, which had been assembled more early than usual, in the hope that the presence of the king might induce them to vote a larger supply than they were accustomed to provide; and during this stay Louis had balls every night; while the Countess de Soissons, from whom he had long withdrawn his notice, attended the card-table of Anne of Austria. He also caused refreshments to be served as a part of the entertainment, by which means he exonerated himself from the necessity of supping with the queen, and thus left himself at liberty to converse with Mary and her sisters.

Every evening the amusements commenced with play; during which Hortensia de Mancini held the cards of the king, while he retired to a distant seat to converse

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

with her sister; and although a change in the weather supervened after the departure from Dijon, which obliged Mademoiselle de Mancini to confine herself to her coach, Louis continued to travel on horseback, and to devote himself to the unhappy girl, whose heart was breaking as she moved along at his side.

On reaching Lyons, where the troops were under arms, Their Majesties alighted at the church of St. John, and were received at the portal by the Archbishop and the Chapter, at that period the most magnificent in France; all the canons being men of quality, known as the Counts of St. John of Lyons; the king being the first canon, and the Duke of Savoy the second.

On the following day the queen received intelligence of the approach of Madame Royale, and all the court assembled in her apartments at an early hour. The cardinal advanced a considerable distance to meet her, being followed a quarter of an hour afterwards by the Duke d'Anjou; and then, after a similar delay, the king and queen entered their coach, accompanied by MADEMOISELLE, and attended by Madame de Noailles,[1] and the Marshal de Villeroi. When it was ascertained that Madame Royale was approaching, the king mounted his horse, and rode forward to meet her; but he soon returned, and springing from the saddle, approached the carriage of the queen with a face beaming with smiles. In reply to her inquiries, he stated that the Princess

[1] The Duchess de Noailles, wife of Adrien Maurice, Duke de Noailles, marshal of France, and minister of state; whose original and collected documents afforded material for the "Political and Military Memoirs to illustrate the Histories of Louis XIV. and Louis XV," of the Abbé Millot.

Marguerite was very agreeable, and very like the portraits that he had seen of her. A little tawny, he added, with a smile; but that did not prevent her from being very well made.[1] Anne of Austria had scarcely time to express her satisfaction at the assurance, when the two carriages having met, both the queen and the duchess alighted; and the latter having kissed the hand of the queen, presented to her the Princess Maurice of Savoy, her eldest daughter, who was the widow of her uncle; and next the Princess Marguerite; after which all the party entered the royal coach, and the king took his place beside the younger princess, with whom he entered into a conversation which soon grew so animated and familiar as to astonish, and somewhat to disturb, the punctiliousness of MADEMOISELLE.

Mary de Mancini was, meanwhile, suffering martyrdom; for, occupying with her sisters one of the carriages in the queen's suite, she could not witness what took place between the king and the Princess Marguerite; and she consequently hastened, on the return of the court to Lyons, (forgetful for the moment of all the pride by which she had hitherto been sustained, and which was at that moment prostrated by the agony of her suspense,) to request of MADEMOISELLE, that, while the king was conducting Madame Royale to her apartments, she would inform her of the effect which the appearance of the princess had produced upon Louis. The haughty daughter of Gaston, to whom the prospect of seeing the sovereign of France, and her own cousin, united to the niece of a man, who, however she might find it

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Motteville.

expedient to secure his friendship, she still secretly considered as a mere Italian adventurer; was not sorry to assure her, that His Majesty had declared himself highly pleased[1] both with her person and her conversation; a reply which overwhelmed poor Mary with despair; while it is nevertheless certain that she was fully justified in her reply, inasmuch as the vanity of Louis, satisfied by the flattery with which he was overwhelmed by the politic duchess, and the natural and easy grace of the princess her daughter, had found himself enabled to throw off his natural timidity with strangers, and to converse without the constraint which he had dreaded as the probable concomitant of such a meeting.

Thus, while Madame Royale, delighted by the reception which she had met from both the king and the queen-mother, was congratulating herself upon what she conceived to be the undoubted success of her journey; and listening with proud complacency to the solicitations of the courtiers, who were eager to do homage to what they also considered as the rising sun; and even the Princess Marguerite herself, who had in vain implored her mother to forego her purpose, rather than expose her to the possibility of an humiliation at whose very idea she revolted, was abandoning herself to the hope that her ambition and her heart were both alike about to be satisfied by an union, not only with the most powerful but also with the most fascinating monarch in Europe; Mary de Mancini retreated in silence to her obscure apartment, to weep in secret over a future upon which she did not dare to speculate.

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

On the morrow, however, a strange and startling change supervened. The queen had taken her precautions to prevent the meeting of the lovers, but it is to be presumed that they had proved ineffectual; as it is certain that the princess, refreshed by repose, and recovered from the fatigue by which she had been oppressed on the previous evening, must have appeared to greater advantage than on the previous occasion, when both body and mind were in a state of suffering. MADEMOISELLE relates that she was short, well-made, and scarcely appeared to touch the ground when she walked; that her eyes were large and tolerably fine, her nose prominent, her mouth defective, her complexion very dark, although not unpleasantly so: her manner gentle, despite the haughtiness of her expression; that she had, moreover, considerable intellect; and, as her conduct afterwards proved, that she was clever and possessed great tact.

Nevertheless, as we have stated, a few hours had sufficed to produce a startling revolution in the feelings and manner of the king. He had on the previous evening warned his immediate suite to be in readiness to attend him to the apartments of the princess on the morrow; but it was remarked that he prepared for this visit with a gravity and listlessness which contrasted powerfully with the gaiety of the preceding day. When he was announced, he found the duchess and her attendants already awaiting him; and Madame Royale was instantly struck by the alteration which had taken place in his deportment, and looked mortified and ill at ease; while the Princess Marguerite retained all her self-possession; and appeared to be unconscious of the

change; nor did she for a moment, during the whole of this trying interview, lose sight of what was due to her own dignity. The court, stupified by so unexpected and sudden a coldness, at once felt that all idea of the marriage was at an end; but the royal visitors were nevertheless overwhelmed with demonstrations of courtesy and regard; the more conspicuous in all probability from the fact that they were a mere matter of hollow expediency.

What rendered the position of Madame Royale doubly painful in this emergency, was the fact that the Duke of Savoy her son had refused to accompany her in her journey, or to appear at Lyons, until he had received assurance of the success of her negotiation; and that, deceived by the warmth and courtesy of her welcome, she had, before she slept, on the night of her arrival, written to assure him of the happy issue of her hopes, and the certainty which she felt of soon seeing the Princess Marguerite seated on the throne of France; while the duke, who had impatiently awaited his mother's messenger, lost no time in setting forth for Lyons, in order to share in the triumphs of his sister; and on the second day of the sojourn of the court of Savoy in that city, intelligence consequently arrived of his approach, which was no sooner communicated to the king than he advanced two leagues upon the road to meet him.

It was evening when he reached the gates; and, accompanied by his royal host, proceeded at once to the apartments of the queen, which were densely crowded; where he was no sooner announced than he sprang forward towards Her Majesty, thrusting the courtly throng to the right and left without preface or apology; and laugh-

ing as he advanced beside the king, with a familiarity which astonished all who heard him. On reaching the spot where the queen stood, he bent his knee, but she raised and embraced him; he then kissed the hand of Madame Royale, who welcomed him with a forced and painful smile; after which he glanced rapidly around him; and having received the presentation of the principal persons assembled, requested that Hortensia de Mancini might be pointed out, paying a well-merited compliment to her beauty. His good looks and joyous spirits secured him the immediate admiration of the whole court, to whom such an apparition was at once novel and exciting; although his subsequent assumption of precedence over the Duke d'Anjou raised the resentment of the young prince to such a height that the queen found herself compelled to sooth his wounded dignity.

The most remarkable feature of this scene was, however, the extreme kindness and condescension with which Anne of Austria treated Mary de Mancini, who had anticipated at her hands a very different reception. Not content with beckoning her to her side, and herself presenting her to the royal guests, she addressed her so constantly and so familiarly that Mary soon found herself involved in the conversation of Her Majesty and the Duke of Savoy; but even while thus engaged, she was lost in wonder at the beaming expression which lighted up the countenance of the queen, and formed so marked a contrast with the restless and struggling physiognomy of the Duchess of Savoy. Nor was the deportment of her uncle less mysteriously triumphant; he had resumed the confident, and almost insolent

bearing of a minister who felt his power, and rejoiced in his impunity.

No wonder that the thoughts of Mary strayed from the brilliant scene before her, to speculate upon the probable meaning of these extraordinary demonstrations. No wonder that wild hopes sprang up in her breast, as she marked this mysterious change; aware as she was that it was principally with a view to estrange the king from herself that Anne of Austria had hastened this meeting with the Princess Marguerite. Her breath came thick; tears gathered in her eyes; a strange dull sound, wherein all the voices by which she was surrounded were vaguely and hopelessly blended in her ears, made her brain whirl; and it was only by a strong effort that she saved herself from fainting.

There was indeed a mystery; but one of which the unhappy girl was far from entertaining a suspicion. The wily cardinal had been careful that early intelligence of the king's journey to Lyons, and the motive by which it was prompted, should reach Madrid, and penetrate even to the Escurial; where it had no sooner been made known, than Philip IV. exclaimed, on some allusion to the royal marriage: *Esto no puede ser, y no sera,* "that cannot and shall not be;" and having uttered this declaration, he immediately despatched Don Antonio Pimentelli[1] to the court of France, to offer the hand of the Infanta to Louis XIV;[1] and this trusty messenger had so well profited by his time, that at the very moment in which the Duchess of Savoy was entering Lyons by the Turin road, he arrived at the opposite gate of the city;

[1] A privy councillor of Spain.

[2] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

where, not having been allowed an opportunity to provide himself with proper passports, he was denied admission; and, owing to his pertinacity, only escaped arrest by an entreaty to be privately conveyed to the residence of the cardinal, to whom he asserted that he had been sent on a secret mission by a high personage;[1] but as some doubts were expressed on the accuracy of this statement, the envoy ultimately found himself compelled to add, that he had been promised access to the minister through a young man, named Colbert,[2] who was confidentially employed in his bureau.

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Motteville.

[2] Jean Baptiste Colbert was born at Rheims in 1619, and was placed, in 1648, in the bureau of the secretary of state, Le Tellier; who relinquished him to Mazarin, by whom he was appointed his personal steward, and in 1660 intrusted with the office of secretary of the queen's commands; (a title which formerly signified a person authorized by virtue of a verdict, or other executive act, to command, in the name of the law, the fulfilment of obligations or engagements announced in the said act; which, remaining unsatisfied after a lapse of three months, required renewal in order to render a seizure legal.) By the cardinal he was subsequently recommended to the notice and favour of Louis XIV, who made him intendant of finance. After the dismissal of Fouquet, when this office was discontinued, Colbert retained the direction of the treasury, with the title of comptroller-general (1661). He wrought a reform successively in every branch of the revenue and public expenditure; diminished the taxes nearly one half, and succeeded, in the space of 22 years, in augmenting the revenue more than 28,000,000 livres. Intrusted, in 1664, with the superintendence of the public works, arts, and manufactures, he established chambers of insurance, increased the magazines, opened new roads, repaired the almost impracticable highways, and constructed the celebrated canal of Languedoc. Under his administration fine cloths, costly silks, stained leathers, ornamented earthenware, articles of tin and steel, and looking-glasses, were originally manufactured in France. It was he who founded the Academy of Literature, (*Inscriptions et Belles Lettres,*)

On this assurance he was conducted to the presence of Colbert, who, having ratified his statement, lost no time in introducing him to the minister, and the result of the interview was a visit from Mazarin to the queen, long after she had retired to rest. On his entrance Anne of Austria rose on her pillow with a look of alarm, which was, however, quickly dispelled by the first exclamation that he uttered.

"I have come to tell you, Madam, a piece of news which Your Majesty never anticipated, and which will astonish you amazingly."[1]

"Is peace proclaimed?" asked the queen incredulously.

"More than peace;" was the triumphant reply; "for the Infanta brings it in her hand as a portion of her dowry."

This communication was made to Anne of Austria on the night of the 29th of November; and no more welcome event could have gladdened to her the close of the year 1658.

A delicate task remained, however, to be accomplished. The alliance with Spain was secured; and although the cardinal had winced at the condition annexed to this concession, which required the free and full pardon of the Prince de Condé and all those who had embraced his cause, the queen, absorbed by the one delightful idea that

in 1663; the Academy of Science in 1666; and the Academy of Architecture in 1671. Appointed to the ministry of the marine in 1669, he established the Indian companies; formed arsenals at Brest, Toulon, Dunkirk, and Havre; founded the port of Rochefort; organized the colonies of Cayenne and Madagascar, and accomplished many other great national works. He died in 1683.

[1] Dréux du Radier.

the dream of her ambition was about to become realized, had no regret to spare to so comparatively unimportant a consideration; while, even amid her joy, she was compelled to feel the embarrassment of her position towards the Duchess of Savoy, who, although she was too well trained to the manner of courts to entertain a doubt that her mission had failed, had as yet received no official intimation to that effect; and also to admit the prudence of the cardinal's suggestion, that, as the articles of the treaty would doubtless necessitate long deliberation, and that much would depend upon the court of France dissimulating their anxiety on the twofold subject of the marriage and the peace, she must make an effort to disguise her satisfaction, and the extent of the concessions which she appeared at that moment so willing to yield in order to secure them.

Having succeeded in impressing upon the conviction of Anne of Austria the immense importance of these points, Mazarin next undertook to relieve her from the ungracious task of communicating the change of purpose which had supervened since her arrival, to Madame Royale; to whom it was agreed that he should communicate, in strict confidence, that a vague hope had just presented itself of his being enabled to accomplish an alliance with Spain; in order to effect which, as the faithful minister of the French nation, he felt bound to exert all his energies; for, burthened as he was with the whole business of the State, he did not consider himself authorized to reject proposals which would ensure to it an advantageous peace: but that, should the negotiations consequent upon the marriage involve insurmountable difficulty, he was to pledge his word to the court of Savoy

that he would use all his influence to conclude an alliance with the Princess Marguerite.

This was the solution of the enigma which had bewildered the unfortunate Mary de Mancini, and the true cause of the favour which she had suddenly experienced from the queen; who saw in the attachment of the cardinal's niece an added pretext for breaking off a marriage which had become distasteful in her eyes, since it had offered even a momentary obstacle to the wish which was nearest to her heart; never pausing to reflect that the same passion might hereafter interfere with the very alliance upon which she now dwelt with mingled pride and joy.

The day succeeding that on which the Duke of Savoy joined the court, the city of Lyons gave a grand ball to Their Majesties at the town-hall, where the Count de Lausale, the provost of the merchants, received the royal and noble guests at the foot of the staircase, and conducted them, in the blaze of a multitude of wax lights, to the great hall, in which a magnificent banquet had been prepared.[1] The king first led out MADEMOISELLE, and subsequently the Princess Marguerite, with whom he had never entered into conversation since their first meeting; and having made this necessary concession to etiquette, he gave his hand to Mary de Mancini, near whom he continued throughout the remainder of the night. The Duke of Savoy declined dancing, as he would not yield precedence to *Monsieur*, who had already taken his place; but the ball was no sooner terminated than he seized an opportunity of declaring in the hearing of

1 Gazette, 7th December, 1658.

MADEMOISELLE, that he had been dying to dance all the evening; and should immediately despatch a courier to Chambery, with orders for a ball to take place there on the following night, that he might amuse himself in his turn. When the king and queen were preparing to retire, he took his leave, announcing his intention to quit Lyons on the morrow, to the great satisfaction of Anne of Austria, who thus saw one difficulty overcome; the impetuous nature of the duke, which was well known to her, having led her to apprehend the outbreak of his indignation when the failure of the king's marriage with his sister should be made public.

Early in the morning he accordingly left the city, after having paid a brief visit to the Count and Countess de Soissons, and taken several turns in the Place Bellecour, where he amused himself by leaping over the low walls of the Mall; and on getting into his carriage to depart, he exclaimed bitterly, "Farewell, France, for ever! I leave you without one regret."[1] It was no secret that Madame Royale had acted throughout the affair contrary both to his own advice and that of his council; and when he found that no allusion was made throughout the day to the subject of her errand, either by the king or his minister, he at once concluded that it had failed, and determined not to await the affront which he perceived to be prepared for his family.

M. de Savoy had no sooner departed than the duchess, resolving to have an explicit understanding with Mazarin, who had been confined to his room for several days with gout, drove to his residence, and demanded an interview. Rumours had reached her of the arrival of the Spanish

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

envoy, and she had also received hints of the mission with which he was entrusted. Accordingly, when she was introduced, she announced that she had come to request from His Eminence a definitive answer, relative to the proposed marriage between the king and her daughter; reproaching him, at the same time, with having induced her to leave Turin only to see him enter into a treaty with Spain.

The undignified excitement which she exhibited, at once induced the cardinal to profit by so valuable an opportunity of abridging the discussion; and he, consequently, without any preamble, avowed that she had been rightly informed, and that he had already commenced negotiations with Spain for the hand of the infanta; as he considered it his imperative duty to secure to France, by any legitimate means, a peace which was so important to her interests.

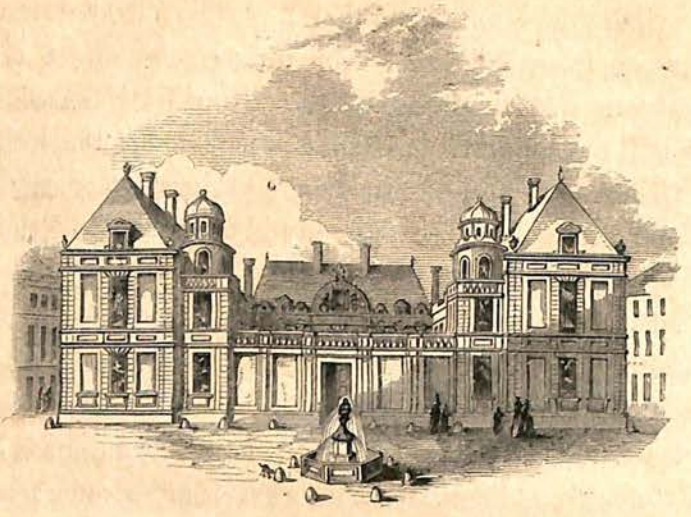
The calmness with which he made an acknowledgment so injurious to her pride, aroused all the ire of the daughter of Henry IV, and the indignation of a mother insulted in her tenderest affections; and the mortification of Madame Royale, upon thus finding herself subjected to an affront which exposed her to the laughter of all Europe, was so great, that, in the excess of her passion, she at length beat her head against the wall near which she was seated; a violence which so alarmed the cardinal, that he hastened to pacify her by the assurance, previously agreed between the queen and himself, that in the event of any impediment to the Spanish alliance, the king should be considered as betrothed to the Princess Marguerite.

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

The duchess having, however, lost all faith in the promises of Mazarin, demanded a written declaration to that effect, to which the minister agreed; and a document was accordingly drawn up, setting forth that should Louis XIV. not find himself compelled, for the welfare of Christianity and of his own kingdom, to marry the Infanta of Spain, he would ally himself to the Princess Marguerite of Savoy.

This paper was signed by the king himself, and some of the state secretaries; and when it was transmitted to Madame Royale, anxious either to conceal as much as possible the affront to which she had been subjected, or believing, like many others, that Philip IV. would accompany his concession with terms which the honour of France would compel the cardinal to refuse, she readily consented to suppress her annoyance, and to part upon friendly terms with her royal relatives. She could not, however, wholly conceal her chagrin, although she affected to display with great exultation a variety of jewels and perfumes which had been presented to her by Mazarin.

Far different was the demeanour of her daughter; throughout the day, which was to be the last of her residence with the French court, the Princess Marguerite preserved the same graceful composure by which she had been characterized since her arrival; her courtesy to those around her continued undiminished; while she appeared rather like a mere spectator of the events which were taking place about her, than one so vitally interested in their issue; and thus, although after their departure many witticisms were uttered on the subject of the duchess, the name of the princess was never mentioned save with admiration and respect.



CHAPTER X.

SATISFACTION OF THE KING—LOUIS XIV. AND MARY DE MANCINI—THE ORGIES AT ROISSI—BANISHMENT OF THE MARQUIS DE MANCINI—POLITIC LENITY OF MAZARIN—MARY DE MANCINI AND HER SISTER REMOVED FROM THE COURT—OPPOSITION OF THE KING—OFFERS TO MARRY MARY DE MANCINI—REFUSAL OF THE CARDINAL—PARTING WORDS OF MARY—REPRESENTATION OF THE ŒDIPUS OF CORNEILLE—DEPARTURE OF MAZARIN FOR THE ISLAND OF PHEASANTS—HIS RETINUE—THE COURT MOVE TO THE SOUTH—THE KING AT BLOIS—MORTIFICATION OF MADEMOISELLE—DISAPPOINTMENT OF MADEMOISELLE D'ORLEANS—THE PHEASANTS OF MONSIEUR—THE MEETING AT ST. JEAN D'ANGÉLY—TEDIOUS NEGOTIATIONS—THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT—THE TWO DIPLOMATISTS—TREATY OF THE PYRENEES—THE MARSHAL DE GRAMMONT AT MADRID—CHARLES II. SOLICITS AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CARDINAL, AND IS REFUSED—THE FEAST OF THE BARMECIDES—RESTORATION OF THE PRINCE DE CONDÉ TO FAVOUR—DEATH OF THE DUKE D'ORLEANS—EXTRAORDINARY CONDUCT OF MADAME—THE ABBÉ DE RANCÉ—THE HEAD OF MADAME DE MONTBAZON—EPIGRAM OF THE PRINCE DE GUIMÉNÉE—FUNERAL OF MONSIEUR, AND CONVERSION OF THE ABBÉ DE RANCÉ.

THE gratification of the king at this unhoped-for emancipation from a marriage which he had considered as inevitable, was earnest and undisguised; and the rather as, having been kept in ignorance of the real progress of the negotiation with Spain, he believed that he was left

free to indulge, for an indefinite period, in his attachment to Mademoiselle de Mancini; and while the continued illness of Mazarin detained the court at Paris, he amused himself in the tennis-court, in drilling the musketeers, or in visiting the cardinal during the morning; and devoted the remainder of the day to reading or conversing with Mary, with whom he also generally took his luncheon. When the queen retired for the night, he conducted Mademoiselle de Mancini to her residence; contenting himself at first by following in another carriage, or driving the one she occupied; but ultimately he threw off even this restraint, and seated himself beside her, profiting by the moonlight to drive for awhile in the Place Bellecour.

So great was the liberty which she enjoyed, that Mary at length began to feel seriously alarmed at the studied neutrality of the queen; and the more she reflected upon the circumstance, the more she felt the importance of clearing up a mystery, of whose existence her good sense sufficed to assure her. In this difficulty she resolved to interrogate the Abbé Fouquet,[1] upon the subject of the mysterious visitor whom the cardinal had received in disguise, and with whom he had been closeted at midnight; never doubting that this interview bore upon her present position. The Abbé was, however, too cautious to betray the secrets of his patron; and evasively replied, that he was one of those secret agents whom her uncle employed in foreign courts, and that he had been sent to inform him that the Queen of

[1] Abbé of Barbeaux and of Rigny, brother of Nicholas Fouquet, the superintendent of finance.

Spain had given birth to a son. Mary desired to hear no more; for in an instant the effect of this unanticipated event became manifest to her. Philip IV, assured of a male successor to the throne, was now free to dispose of the hand of his daughter, and to seal, by these means, a peace between the two countries; she could not disguise from herself the desirableness of such a reconciliation to two nations exhausted by a long and harassing war; and she at once felt that all was lost. Meanwhile, Don Antonio Pimentelli, concealed in the apartments of the cardinal, was engaged with him in preparing the different clauses of the treaty which was to secure the peace of Europe; but as nothing could be definitively arranged save at a conference of the French and Spanish ministers, an interview was at length arranged between Mazarin and Don Louis de Haro. The meeting was to be held on the frontiers of the two kingdoms; and it only remained to be decided on which side of the river it should take place.

After a short tour in the southern provinces, the court returned to Paris; and still Mary de Mancini found herself treated with unlimited indulgence by the queen, who, satisfied with the progress of the secret negotiations, felt convinced that a passion for an inferior, however violent, could not militate in the mind of Louis against the interests of his kingdom, and the gratification of receiving the hand of the first princess in Europe. She had already forgotten her own youth; and the enthusiastic days when, wooed by the Duke of Buckingham, she had wept to remember that she was mated with a king.

The court had not long been established once more in the capital, and Mazarin was still occupied in discussing

the various and conflicting claims of the two long-estranged nations, whose renewal of amity was to be effected by the gentle agency of a woman, ere he experienced a severe mortification, which he, however, transmuted, with his usual ability, into a new source of personal honour. Several young noblemen had assembled, during the Holy Week, at Roissi, a château within a short distance of Paris; and there, while all classes of the population were engaged in the devotions imperative at so sacred a season, they abandoned themselves to the grossest dissipation; indulging in orgies so profane and disreputable, that they soon became the subject of public comment.

Among them was the Marquis de Mancini, the nephew of the cardinal, whose amiable qualities and personal advantages had greatly endeared him to the court; and the rumour of the disorders in which he had been an actor, no sooner reached the ears of Mazarin, than, refusing to listen to the entreaties in his favour which were poured forth on all sides, he immediately banished him from the capital; while he contented himself by simply remonstrating with his accomplices, who all belonged to the first families in the kingdom; and after exhorting them to greater discretion in future, he dismissed them unpunished; by which means he conciliated the whole of the families of the young libertines, who, on witnessing his unrelenting severity towards a nephew to whom he was known to be deeply attached, had anticipated little mercy for those of their own blood.[1]

In like manner he sacrificed Mary to the exigencies of the queen-mother; who represented to him that so

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Motteville.

long as she remained within reach of the king, who would resist every effort that might be made to deprive him of her society and counsel, they could entertain no hope either of a peace, or the alliance of which it was a condition. For a moment, however, the cardinal hesitated; alleging that there was reason to apprehend, should they act too suddenly, that the king might be roused to resistance; whereas, by proceeding calmly and gradually, and estranging the lovers almost imperceptibly, they might be enabled to carry their point without opposition.

An ironical smile played about the lips of Anne of Austria, as she remarked that the over-merciful policy lately adopted by His Eminence might, perhaps, fail to produce the effect which he appeared to anticipate; and that he would do well to reflect upon the nature of the advice which his niece was accustomed to bestow upon the king; and the great probability there existed, that if it were allowed time to work, it would soon emancipate Louis altogether from the authority of both his mother and his minister.

The queen was well aware of the force of this reflection upon the mind of the cardinal, who dreaded nothing so much as the loss of power; and as she glanced towards him while pronouncing the remark, she saw by the expression of his countenance that she had struck home. He, nevertheless, affected to treat such a consideration lightly; and observed that the king was too well aware of the value of his services, to dispense with them while they could be rendered available; upon which the queen, forgetful of the restraint which she had hitherto put upon her suspicions, accused him of still nourishing unseemly

hopes, based upon what he considered to be the weakness of his sovereign; and renewed her declaration, that she would sooner die than see her son commit the infamy of a marriage by which he must be degraded.[1]

Stung by the expression, Mazarin was about to withdraw; when the queen, instantly conscious of the error she had committed, prevented his purpose; and conjured him to overlook a few hasty words wrung from her in the excitement of a moment in which she felt that all her dearest interests were at stake; upon which, with his usual policy, he smiled away the insult he was never likely to forget; and declared, that in order to prove to Her Majesty how greatly she had wronged him by her suspicions, he would at once remove both Mary and her sisters to his château at Brouage.[2]

Having come to this resolution, he lost no time in summoning Madame de Venelle, the governess of Hortensia and Mary Anne de Mancini; and after having directed her to watch all Mary's movements, gave her orders to prepare her charges for an immediate removal to Brouage. Louis, however, no sooner heard of the arrangement, than he hastened to demand an explanation of the cardinal, and refused to permit the departure of

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Motteville.

[2] Brouage is a fortified sea-port town, in the department of the Lesser Charente, opposite the island of Oléron. It was founded in 1555 by James, Lord of Pons, and fortified during the religious wars. After the taking of La Rochelle, Richelieu renewed the fortifications, and erected it into a government, he being himself the first governor. It possessed an excellent harbour, which, in the 17th century, was blocked with mud. The environs of Brouage are covered by unwholesome marshes; and the finest salt works in France are found there.

Mademoiselle de Mancini from the court. Vainly did the minister represent the probable disgust of the Infanta, should she learn that, even while the negotiations of marriage were pending, the king retained near him a person to whom his attachment had long ceased to be problematical; the indignation of Philip IV; and the consequent continuance of a war which was rapidly exhausting the resources of the kingdom. Louis declared his determination not to sacrifice his personal happiness to such considerations; alleging that France was quite able to protect itself against Spain as it had hitherto done; that the war would afford him opportunities of convincing his people that he was worthy to be their sovereign; and that rather than be the cause of unhappiness to Mary, he was willing and anxious to raise her to the throne; an event which must secure to the cardinal a fixed and honourable position, of which no national disaffection could thenceforth deprive him.

Mazarin shook his head coldly and incredulously. "That person," he said, "has no regard for me; but, on the contrary, a vast deal of aversion, because I do not encourage her in her madness. Her ambition is beyond all bounds, and her spirit warped and violent. She despises every one, throws off all restraint, and is always ready to commit a thousand extravagances. It is believed that I have secretly encouraged her, and this reflection overwhelms me. I neither eat nor sleep, and am wasting away with vexation and uneasiness. If things last much longer in this state, I will embark with all my family, and go and hide myself in some corner of Italy, where we shall never he heard of again."[1]

[1] Extract from a MS. collection of Letters written at Libourne.

A few violent words did not, however, suffice to dissuade the young sovereign from his purpose; and he reiterated his resolution to marry Mary, and thus place her beyond the power of her enemies; but the cardinal remained firm; and although Louis wept, and, as some authors affirm, even knelt before the inexorable minister, to induce him to recal his verdict, he did so without effect. For an instant the indignant king even contemplated opposition; but as Mazarin, who had never for a moment laid aside his attitude of command, continued to expatiate upon the miseries to which his obstinacy upon this subject would expose, not only the court but the whole kingdom, the unhappy young monarch, painfully conscious of his utter helplessness, and terrified by so fearful a prophecy, threw himself into a chair, and burying his face in his hands, fell into a stupor of despair.

The cardinal felt that he had conquered; and he had, indeed, obtained a double victory, over his own ambition, and the first serious affection which Louis had ever experienced. The departure of Mary was consequently decided on; and upon the previous evening the king paid his usual visit to the queen-mother in a state of wretchedness which he made no effort to conceal. He had no sooner entered her apartment than Anne of Austria, taking a flambeau from the table, retired with him to the bath-room, where they were closeted together for an hour, and on their re-appearance were both evidently affected; the eyes of the king were red with weeping, and in a few moments he withdrew.[1]

The dreaded morrow arrived; and when the nieces of the cardinal had taken leave of the queen, Mary pro-

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Motteville.

ceeded to the king's apartment, where she found him deluged in tears.

"Sire;" she exclaimed reproachfully, as, with a dry eye and a quivering lip, she approached his chair, and extended towards him her trembling hand; "you are a king—you weep—and yet I go!"

The only reply of Louis was a fresh burst of sorrow, as he suffered his head to fall upon the table, without the utterance of a syllable. But Mary needed no other answer. She at once felt that all was over between them; and her pride enabled her to withdraw from his presence without one attempt at reproach or expostulation. Her sisters were already seated in the carriage; and she took her place beside them, scarcely appearing to remark that she had been followed by the king, who remained standing upon the same spot until the carriage had disappeared, when he departed for Chantilly, in order to indulge his grief in solitude.

During this time, the veteran Corneille had produced his Œdipus; and Molière was pursuing his representations at the theatre of the Petit-Bourbon. Moreover two other celebrities had appeared, although they were yet to acquire the undying fame which awaited them hereafter; one was la Fontaine, who at this period took up his abode at Paris; and the other, Bossuet; while Racine and Boileau began to give the promise of future excellence which their after career so fully realized.

Four days after the departure of his nieces, the cardinal left Paris in his turn with a princely retinue, for the Island of Pheasants;[1] which had been ultimately

[1] The Island of Pheasants is a small Spanish islet formed by the Bidassoa, within a league of Fontarabia and the Gulf of Gascony.

decided on as the rendezvous of the contracting parties for the royal marriage. In his suite he had two archbishops, four bishops, three marshals, and several nobles of the highest rank; as well as M. de Lyonne, the minister of state, who was to assist him in his labours. Don Antonio Pimentelli had already preceded him, to announce his approach to the Spanish minister; while on the day of his arrival at St. Jean de Luz, the court left Fontainebleau for the south; although it was not generally known that the king had absolutely refused to undertake this journey until it had been conceded that in passing Cognac he should have an interview with Mary de Mancini. The arguments of the queen against this measure were at first vehement; but as Louis persisted in his purpose, it was ultimately arranged that the meeting should take place.

Great preparations were made by all those who had been selected to accompany the court; and the most magnificent apparel was prepared, in order to do honour to the royal nuptials; while as the illustrious *cortège* passed along the streets of Paris, the acclamations of the populace were loud and long; and a thousand blessings were called down upon the head of the young king, and a thousand prayers put up for the success and safety of his journey.

The queen-mother was accompanied by the Princess de Conti, the Princess-Palatine, the Countess de Flex her lady of honour, and the Duchess d'Uzès. From Fontainebleau, the court first proceeded to Chambord, where *Monsieur* and *Madame* were then residing for a few days; and upon the road the king gaily remarked to

MADEMOISELLE, who was also in the queen's coach, that he had not changed his dress, nor untied his hair, because he apprehended that by increasing his good looks he should heighten the regret of his uncle, as well as that of *Madame*, and Mademoiselle d'Orleans her sister, who had long been taught to consider herself as his future wife; and that he had consequently disfigured himself as much as possible. Nor had *Monsieur* and *Madame* been wholly without misgivings on their side. *Madame* being not only mortified at the failure of a marriage with her daughter, of which she had so long contemplated the possibility, that she had finally considered it as certain; but also tormented with fearful visions of the outlay which would be necessitated by the royal visit; to which she had only become tolerably reconciled by the almost daily letters of MADEMOISELLE, which, in all probability, contained something more weighty than mere argument.

The uneasiness of *Monsieur*, although less squalid, was scarcely less puerile and undignified. He had amused himself since his sojourn at Blois by preserving pheasants, of which he possessed immense numbers, and which he never suffered to be destroyed; and the conviction that the king would not omit to profit by so excellent an opportunity of enjoying a favourite sport, made him perfectly wretched.

When the court arrived at Blois, Mademoiselles d'Orleans and de Valois received their royal relatives at the foot of the stairs, attended by their scanty train of ladies; and although each individual had made immense exertion to present a favourable appearance,

the antiquated air of their costume afforded legitimate subject for merriment among the more modish attendants of the queen.

As he alighted, the king complimented *Madame* on the beauty of his cousin, Mademoiselle d'Orleans; whom, however, he saw at an unfortunate moment; her mortification upon hearing that he was about to form an alliance with the Infanta being legibly impressed upon her countenance; which, coupled with the fact that she was extremely disfigured by the bites of some gnats that had stung her during the night, robbed her of the brilliant complexion which is the greatest charm of youth. When the party had entered the palace, the courtiers dispersed themselves through the apartments and galleries, criticising aloud the superannuated appearance of the furniture, and the obsolete dresses of the ladies; nor were they more conciliating during the dinner, of which they affected to be afraid to partake; while MADEMOISELLE sat by, trembling with mortification and annoyance.[1] Neither the king nor his mother disguised their anxiety to be gone; and they were no sooner again upon the road than they indulged in numerous mirthful reminiscences of their visit, which were gall and wormwood to the haughty spirit of MADEMOISELLE; who was, nevertheless, compelled to smile when Louis described to her the evident discomposure of her father at the destruction of the fourteen pheasants, which he had killed while awaiting dinner.

It was with an aching heart that Mademoiselle de Mancini had received an order from the queen to proceed with her sisters to St. Jean d'Angély, to await the

[1] Mémoires de Madame de la Vallière.

passage of the court, in order to pay their respects to Her Majesty; for the fact that the queen had herself commanded this meeting sufficed to assure Mary that she no longer dreaded her influence; and the idea of again seeing the king, only to look on him in the midst of a crowd of courtiers, tortured her almost beyond endurance. Proud in her own integrity, she nevertheless made a powerful effort to suppress all exhibition of her wretchedness; and entered the presence of the queen with a calm dignity which astonished all around her.

Her interview with the king was, however, a bitter one; for, divided between vanity and affection, Louis was at once less firm and less self-possessed than Mary. He wept bitterly, and bewailed the fetters by which he was shackled; but, as he remarked the change which nights of watching and of tears had made in her appearance, he felt half consoled; and the only result of this meeting was to harrow the heart of the poor victim of political expediency; and to prove to her upon how unstable a foundation she had blindly built up her superstructure of hope.

From St. Jean d'Angély the court proceeded to Bordeaux, and thence to Toulouse, where they halted to await the conclusion of the treaty. The negotiation was a tedious one. The pardon of the Prince de Condé, and his restoration to all his honours, was a point which the cardinal was long in conceding; and this was no sooner arranged than fresh difficulties arose as to every city which was to be claimed or ceded. Weakened as he was in health; not only by the disease from which he was suffering, but also from the immense fatigue and

want of rest which he was compelled to undergo, Mazarin nevertheless rallied all his energies, and refused to ratify the treaty until he had rendered it one of unequivocal advantage to the nation which he represented. It was then signed by both ministers in duplicate; after which they also appended their signatures to the marriage contract.

This contract insured to the Infanta a portion of five hundred thousand golden crowns, payable in three instalments; in consideration of which sum she formally renounced "all other pretensions to the inheritance of her parents; it being clearly understood that neither she, nor her children, could succeed to any of the states of his Catholic Majesty, even in the event of his legitimate successors becoming extinct."

The Marshal de Grammont, who had only awaited the signing of the treaty, then took leave of Their Majesties, and hastened as ambassador-extraordinary to Madrid, to demand the hand of the Infanta; while the cardinal, worn out both in body and mind, arrived at Toulouse, after a three months' sojourn in the unwholesome air of the Island of Pheasants. Between the two ministers the whole of the arrangements, as well as the treaty itself, had been one great diplomatic struggle; for although the marriage of the king, and the general peace of Europe were the objects of the conference, more than a month was spent in settling the difficulties of precedence, and in regulating the ceremonies to be observed. The cardinals placed themselves on an equality with crowned heads, and France claimed pre-eminence over the other European powers; but Don Louis de Haro would concede neither of these

assumptions; and refused to treat save on equal terms, both as regarded himself, and the nation of which he was the representative. Mazarin brought to the strife all his usual dexterity and cunning; and Don Louis a slowness and deliberation which afforded him ample time to sift the policy of his opponent to the very dregs, although he refrained from offering any pledges, or holding out any promises; while the cardinal was lavish of both, although they were all equivocal. The aim of the Italian was to take his antagonist by surprise; that of the Spaniard to guard himself from an attempt which he had soon penetrated; and it was asserted that the latter had remarked of the cardinal, that his policy was very mistaken upon one point, for he was always seeking to deceive.

Be that as it might, it is certain that, save as regarded the peace, Mazarin obtained no actual advantage through this marriage. The portion of Maria Theresa which, as we have already stated, was nominally fixed at five hundred thousand gold crowns, would not, had it been forthwith paid into the treasury, have covered the outlay of the king's journey to the frontier to receive her. Nevertheless, these five hundred thousand crowns, equal at that period to two millions five hundred thousand livres, were a great subject of contestation between the ministers; and finally, France never received more of the dowry than a hundred thousand francs.

Charles IV, Duke of Lorraine, was, by this treaty, made to feel the vengeance of both the kingdoms against which he had borne arms; and he was sacrificed by each the more readily that he was no longer in a position to oppose their united verdict. France

restored to him his principality, but demolished Nancy, and placed an interdict upon his maintaining armed troops; while, in the case of the Prince de Condé, against whom Louis XIV. had even greater cause of complaint, Don Louis de Haro obliged the cardinal to give a pledge of his restoration to the favour of his monarch, by a threat that should this article be rejected, Spain would continue to him the sovereignty of Rocroy, Câtelet, and other fortresses of which he was then in possession. By her concession upon this point, France consequently gained not only the renewed fealty of her greatest general, but also the cities just named.[1]

Both these subtle ministers were, however, guilty of one act of policy, as short-sighted as it was contemptible. Charles II, at that period hopeless of regaining his throne through his own efforts, or those of his immediate friends, who had already fruitlessly exhausted both their blood and their resources in his cause, no sooner heard of the conference of the Pyrenees than he hastened to implore the help of Don Louis and Mazarin; flattering himself that their respective sovereigns, who were both his relatives, would at last, upon the occasion of their alliance, Cromwell moreover being dead, revenge a cause in which all the crowned heads of Europe were individually interested: but neither Don Louis nor the cardinal would concede an interview to the unhappy and exiled king, fearing to rouse the resentment of the English ambassador, who was still at St. Jean de Luz.

Could Charles have foreseen that only a few weeks were destined to elapse ere he should be summoned by his own subjects to assume his birthright, and to ascend

[1] Le Siècle de Louis XIV. *Francheville.*

the throne of his ancestors, without one helping hand from among the mighty potentates of Europe, he might have spared himself that last and useless humiliation. Certain it is that this unlooked-for event occurred so suddenly, that he was in peaceful possession of his kingdom before the treaty of the Pyrenees was signed.

The reception of the Marshal de Grammont at Madrid had, meanwhile, been most triumphant. He had entered the city post, in order to testify the impatience of his master, magnificently attired in the garb of a courier, and followed by a splendid retinue;[1] and on his arrival, the admiral of Castille had invited him to a gorgeous banquet; which, however, like the feast of the Barmecide, was meant rather for the eye than for the palate. Seven hundred dishes, emblazoned with the arms of the admiral, were served up, of which the contents were covered with saffron and gilding; but all were in succession carried away untouched, to the great discomfort of the guests, who were compelled to sit for four hours spectators of these unprofitable evolutions.[2]

The fêtes and galas given by the King of Spain in honour of his arrival, revenged him, however, on the visionary banquet of the admiral; and left no doubt of the success of his mission.

As the court left Toulouse M. de Condé quitted Brussels, accompanied by his wife, his daughter and his son; and at Coulommeirs he was met by the Duke and

[1] "The Marshal de Grammont left this city for St. Jean de Luz, and thence for Madrid, not only with the most attractive retinue, but also with an immense suite of persons of distinction, who were anxious to increase the splendour of an embassy of this importance."—*Bayonne Gazette of the 27th Sept.* 1659.

[2] Mémoires du Maréchal de Grammont.

Duchess de Longueville; when, after a hasty greeting, the former went forward to announce his approach to the court, where the Prince de Conti had already arrived. Two days afterwards Condé reached Aix in his turn; and when he was announced to the Queen, MADEMOISELLE was in the apartment of Her Majesty, awaiting with anxiety the appearance of the illustrious rebel; but she was fated for the present to disappointment, as Anne of Austria had no sooner ascertained the identity of her visitor than she turned to the princess, and requested her to leave the room; asserting that M. de Condé had desired that their first meeting might take place without witnesses. MADEMOISELLE replied with a bitter smile that she was convinced The Prince would consider her absence upon such an occasion very extraordinary. The queen, however, retorted in an angry tone, and MADEMOISELLE found herself compelled to obey, which she did with an ill grace; and proceeded forthwith to complain to the cardinal of the want of consideration which had been shown to her, declaring that, should she be subjected to a renewed affront of this nature, she would immediately withdraw from court. Mazarin made an ample apology, by which the haughty princess was appeased; and M. de Condé having shortly afterwards paid her a visit, she soon forgot her momentary mortification.[1]

The Prince, meanwhile, relieved every one about him of the embarrassment which might have been felt upon the occasion of his re-appearance, by the perfect self-possession which he exhibited; and by accosting each

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

individual with whom he came in contact, with the easy and indifferent air of one who had only parted from them the previous evening; and he had not been many hours in Aix ere the king was talking familiarly to him of all that he had accomplished both in France and Flanders, with as much interest as though he had performed all these exploits in the royal service.

On the evening succeeding the departure of the court for Toulon, as MADEMOISELLE was writing in her apartment, a courier from Blois was announced, who proved to be a jester on the establishment of *Monsieur;* and who threw upon her table a large packet of papers, exclaiming that her father was not dead, nor did he believe that he was likely to die this time; and then, without explaining the meaning of this extraordinary announcement, asked if the cardinal were in the city, as he had a letter to deliver to him.

The princess, greatly alarmed, inquired into the motive of his journey; when he stated that *Monsieur* had been suffering from brain-fever, but that he was now better; and that his object was to inform the court of the circumstance. The letters of MADEMOISELLE, however, gave a less favourable opinion of the temporary convalescence of her father; and the certificate of the physicians by which they were accompanied, left no doubt of the gravity of the attack, nor of their apprehensions as to the result which might supervene.

Under these circumstances, the princess lost no time in sending a messenger to the cardinal, stating her anxiety to start immediately for Blois; but Mazarin declared that he was not aware if her departure would be strictly according to etiquette; and

that she must delay her purpose until he ascertained the fact. In obedience to this decision, MADEMOISELLE contented herself by ordering prayers to be put up in all the churches, and awaited as patiently as she could the permission of the court to assist in closing the eyes of her dying father; when on returning from the evening service of the Fathers of the Oratory on the following Sunday, she found all her retinue assembled in her ante-chamber; and the truth flashed upon her at once. *Monsieur* was dead; and retiring to her closet she burst into tears.

MADEMOISELLE could not, however, even while she wept as a daughter, forget that she was also a princess; and, accordingly, she soon sufficiently controlled her filial emotion to remember that it was her duty to inform the king of the death of his uncle. "These are dignified proceedings," she remarks; "in which we should never fail." She, therefore, sustained by this reflection, dried her tears, and wrote a letter to the cardinal, informing him that her grief would not allow her to address the king; but that as her duty obliged her to inform His Majesty of the death of *Monsieur*, she requested him to perform the office for her. She then sent a gentleman to wait upon the queen and the Duke d'Anjou with the melancholy tidings; and proceeded to write a second letter to the Prince de Conti, to inform him of her anxiety that he should succeed to the government of Languedoe, for which she strongly advised him to apply; but counselled him, at the same time, not to speak of any private government, in order that all such might be left to those upon whom *Monsieur* had himself bestowed them; after which she gave the necessary orders

for her mourning, and then retired to rest, "occupied by a sincere regret at the death of *Monsieur*."

We have shown how MADEMOISELLE bore the loss of her last parent; let us now turn to the little court of Blois, and examine the effect produced by the demise of Gaston upon those by whom he was immediately surrounded.

Madame was not present when he expired; but he no sooner ceased to breathe than she demanded the keys of the presses, in which she locked up the dinner-services, the plate, and every thing that came under her hand; and having secured all articles of value, she discharged the whole of her household, retaining only a few Lorrainese attendants, who were as rapacious as herself. She next removed the sheets from the bed upon which *Monsieur* lay dead; and as there was, consequently, no linen left in which to shroud the corpse, it became necessary for some one to supply it; when Madame de Raré, the governess of his daughters, gave the last proof of her attachment to her master by furnishing the death-sheet in which he was carried to his grave.[1] Moreover, the usual religious ceremonies were neglected; and scarcely a prayer was said for the son, the brother, and the uncle of three powerful sovereigns. The doors of the apartment in which he lay were closed every evening, and the priests left the body unattended during the night. Notwithstanding the severity of the cold, neither light nor fire

[1] It is a singular fact that a similar circumstance occurred at the death of *Madame* herself. After her body had been embalmed, not one of her women would give a chemise for her to be buried in, but said that they did not possess any; and it was the Princess of Wirtemberg who supplied the linen necessary for her decent interment.

was allowed in the room; and when, after having laid in state for several days, the body was finally removed to St. Denis, the funeral procession was composed only of a few pages and almoners.

Etiquette prescribed for *Madame* a retirement of forty days in an apartment hung with black, where she should have received the condolences of the public bodies, and of her own private friends; but Marguerite of Lorraine was not, as we have shown, a person to be influenced by common rules; and although no princess had yet ventured to neglect this last ceremonial of mourning, she dispensed with the restraint and the expense alike, and at the end of eleven or twelve days reappeared in the midst of her diminished household, to the great scandal of all its members. Nor was this all; for having arranged her affairs at Blois, she announced her intention of forthwith proceeding to Paris, to entreat the king in behalf of herself and her daughters; and when she set forth for this purpose, instead of travelling in a close coach, she selected an open carriage, by which means she was recognised in every town and village through which she passed.[1]

The curate of St. Saviour of Blois had attended the prince in his last moments, the Principal of the Oratory, who was his confessor, not being upon the spot; while the Abbé de Rancé,[2] the nephew of the Archbishop of Tours, attached himself with exemplary devotion to His Royal Highness; and until he expired, remained constantly by his bedside.

[1] Mémoires de Madame de la Vallière.

[2] Dom Armand John le Bouthillier, nephew of the superintendent of finance.

Previously to that period he had been known only by his companionable qualities, his powers of intellect, and his utter disregard of the duties of his sacred profession; but the death-bed of *Monsieur*, as MADEMOISELLE relates, changed the whole tenor of his life. Conscious of the errors of his past career, beside the body of the almost forsaken prince, whose passage to the tomb he had so materially assisted to render happy, he formed the resolution of abandoning a world by which he had been so grievously misguided; and as he had the control of the Abbey of La Trappe, he at once determined that it should be the place of his penance, for which purpose he requested permission of the King to reform the community; and had no sooner received the royal sanction to that effect, than he took the vows of the rigid order of St. Bernard, and was deputed by the whole body to proceed to Rome; where he succeeded admirably in his mission, and displayed so much piety and ability that he was soon regarded as a worthy successor to the saint whose garb he wore. On his return to France he reorganized his abbey, and placed it upon the same footing which it held in the time of its holy founder.

Other authorities, however, attribute the conversion of M. de Rancé to a very different cause. The whole of his youth had been devoted to dissipation; and among other women of rank to whom he had attached himself in a manner unbecoming his profession, was the beautiful but dissipated Duchess de Montbazon; from whom, on one occasion, he had been compelled to separate himself for a short time, and to whose residence he hastened immediately on his return from his journey, ignorant that she had died during his absence. Entering her apartment

unannounced, he was horror-struck on seeing her head placed upright upon a dish, the leaden coffin which had been prepared having been found too short for the body; and this sight, for which he had been totally unprepared, produced so great an effect upon his mind, that it determined him to the retreat which has been already mentioned![1]

Certain it is that this conversion created infinitely more sensation than the death by which it had been preceded, for Gaston left scarcely a regret behind him. Always disaffected and suspicious, he was perpetually in a state of moral revolt; and, when circumstances occasionally compelled him to put his theories into practice, he unhesitatingly sacrificed all those who had been weak enough to trust to his honour, when by such measures he could ensure his own safety. Not one of all his friends escaped some share of suffering for his sake; exile, imprisonment, and death had been alike the reward of their misplaced confidence in his principles; and this abandonment of their interests in the hour of need was so notorious, that, on one occasion, when, at a public rejoicing, he extended his hand to the Prince de Guémenée who had ascended some steps, the prince said with a somewhat equivocal smile; "I thank Your Royal Highness the more sincerely for your help, as I am the first of your friends whom you ever assisted to descend from a scaffold;"[2] a bitter pleasantry, which must have smitten with momentary shame even Gaston of Orleans.

Neither the death of a member of the royal house, nor the conversion of an abbé of the court, were, however,

[1] Dictionnaire Encyclopédique de Charles Saint-Laurent.

[2] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

events of sufficient importance to divert the thoughts of all classes for more than a very brief interval from the approaching marriage of the king; and, accordingly, Gaston was laid beside his illustrious kindred in the gloomy vaults of St. Denis, and the iron gates closed behind him, never again to revolve upon their hinges until they once more fell back to admit another inmate to this Necropolis of departed royalty; while de Rancé buried himself in the living tomb of La Trappe, to fast and pray, exist in eternal silence, and daily dig his grave with his own hands, without leaving any lasting impression upon the public mind.

Every eye was turned towards the Pyrenees.

CHAPTER XI.

POSTPONEMENT OF THE ROYAL MARRIAGE—JOURNEY OF THE COURT TO ST. JEAN DE LUZ—MARRIAGE OF LOUIS XIV.—PORTRAIT OF THE YOUNG QUEEN—MEETING OF THE KINGS OF FRANCE AND SPAIN—MARY DE MANCINI AT BROUAGE—THE MARQUIS DE PEGUILAIN—RETURN OF THE COURT TOWARDS PARIS—THE PRINCE COLONNA ASKS THE HAND OF MARY DE MANCINI—SHE REJECTS HIS SUIT—MESDEMOISELLES DE MANCINI SUMMONED TO FONTAINEBLEAU—INDIFFERENCE OF THE KING AT THEIR MEETING—MARRIAGE OF MARY DE MANCINI AND THE PRINCE COLONNA—HER SUBSEQUENT CAREER.

CONSIDERABLE surprise was felt by the court when they received an intimation that the marriage of the sovereign was postponed until the following spring; the severity of the weather, and the consequent probability of a rigorous winter, being a pretext for this delay on the part of the King of Spain; who could not, as he asserted, expose himself without imprudence at such a season to a journey for which both his age and his infirmities unfitted him.

In the interval which consequently elapsed, intelligence reached the French court of the death of the second prince of Spain, and great alarm was felt both by the queen and Mazarin that this event would prevent the completion of the treaty; but as peace had become quite as desirable for the one kingdom as for the other, their fears were not realized; and in the month of May, 1660, Louis XIV. and his court left Toulouse for Bayonne; and thence proceeded to St. Jean de Luz, where they were to be met by the King of Spain and the Infanta.

Nothing could exceed the magnificence of the prepara-

tions for this royal and nuptial interview. A temporary palace had been erected in the Isle of Pheasants, which was redolent of Spanish splendour and French elegance; a bridge connected the island with the main land on either frontier; and infinite difficulties had been vanquished in order to place the two sovereigns on a perfect equality, even in the most minute details of accommodation and ornament. The bridges, forming covered galleries, were precisely similar, and led to two saloons splendidly furnished and decorated, having lateral chambers and dressing-rooms; while in the exact centre, calculated to an inch of surface, was the grand hall of meeting, which was extremely spacious, and lighted only on the riverward side. Two doors of entrance, placed precisely opposite to each other, enabled the two great contracting parties to make a simultaneous entrance; while the floor, divided in a straight line across the centre, was covered on the Spanish side with Persian carpets wrought on a ground of gold and silver; and the moiety which belonged to France was overspread with crimson Genoa velvet, laced with gold and silver. In each compartment were placed an arm-chair and a table; and upon the latter stood two inkstands and two timepieces; in short, not the slightest deviation, save in the material which covered the floor, was perceptible in the respective sides of the vast apartment.[1]

On the 3d of June, Don Louis de Haro, as the proxy of Louis XIV, having the Bishop of Fréjus as his witness, married the Infanta Maria-Theresa, daughter of Philip IV, King of Spain, in the church of Fontarabia, where the

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

ceremony was conducted with the most stately and chilling gravity. MADEMOISELLE, who had with some difficulty obtained permission to attend the espousals *incognita*, relates that a dais of gold brocade, enclosed by curtains save on the side next the altar, had been prepared for the king in the tribune, and beside it was placed a seat for Don Louis de Haro; with, beyond this, a bench for the grandees of the kingdom on one side, and a second for the almoners directly opposite. All the French who were present occupied the steps of the altar.

The king entered the church, preceded by a few Swiss guards, the larger portion of the troops remaining at the entrance; and immediately before him walked the Bishop of Pampeluna, with the whole of his clergy, in full sacerdotal costume. Philip IV. wore a grey coat embroidered with silver, and his hat looped with a large diamond, to which was attached a pendant pearl, both belonging to the crown jewels. He was followed by the Infanta, who walked alone, dressed in white satin richly embroidered, and ornamented with small bows of silver serge, a quantity of ill-set gems, and a mass of false hair. Her train was carried by her first lady of the household.[1]

By some strange oversight the Bishop of Fréjus was not apprised of the precise hour at which the marriage had been appointed to take place; and the service was actually about to commence when he was missed, and a messenger hastily despatched to his residence, whence he arrived

[1] *Camerièri Major*, are persons who, in the Peninsular courts, have unlimited authority over the servants of the palace; dress and undress the king, or other member of the royal family whom they serve, and exercise their jurisdiction over all which relates to the internal economy of the household.

without delay totally unattended; and with evident chagrin reproached Don Louis for his neglect, as he passed on to take his place at the altar.

At the conclusion of the mass Philip IV. seated himself in his chair of state, and the Infanta took her place upon her cushion; after which the bishop also seated himself, and Don Louis approached, and presented to him the procuration of the King of France, which the Bishop of Fréjus had just delivered into his hands. It was read by one of the assistant priests, as were also the Papal dispensations; after which the marriage service was performed; the king standing the whole time between the Infanta and Don Louis.

When the princess was called upon to make her affirmative reply, she turned round and faced her father; making, when she had so done, a very profound curtsey, as if to solicit his permission to utter it, which was apparently conceded; she then slowly and gravely moved her lips, and answered in a low firm tone. Throughout the whole of the ceremony the Infanta never once gave her hand to Don Louis, nor did he present the ring to her. At the termination of the service she knelt before the king, and kissed his hand; after which Philip withdrew his hat, and embraced her. She then rose, placed herself on the king's right hand, and the whole train swept after them from the church.

Nothing could more thoroughly illustrate the different genius of the two nations, than the manner in which they observed the royal marriage day. At Fontarabia not a vestige of rejoicing was to be detected; all was grave and still, and monotonous as usual; while in France the people were profuse in outlay both of money

and acclamation. Their joy amounted, indeed, almost to delirium.[1]

"The Infanta," says Madame de Motteville, who accompanied MADEMOISELLE to witness the marriage; "is short, but well made; we admired the extreme fairness of her complexion; her blue eyes appeared to us to be fine, and charmed us by their softness and brilliancy. We celebrated the beauty of her mouth, and of her somewhat full and roseate lips. The outline of her face is long, but being rounded at the chin, pleased us; her cheeks, rather large but handsome, had their share of our praise; her hair of a very light auburn, accorded admirably with her fine complexion. To speak the truth, with more height, and handsomer teeth, she would deserve to be estimated as one of the most beautiful persons in Europe. Her bust appeared to be well formed and tolerably full, but her dress was horrible."[2]

On the following day Anne of Austria, the King of Spain, and the royal bride, met on the Island of Conference. The queen-mother arrived first, Philip IV. having been detained at Fontarabia by the visit of the Duke de Créqui; who waited upon him in the name of his royal master, to present to the young queen, not the jewels of the crown, but those which Louis offered as his marriage gift, and which were very fine. She was accompanied only by *Monsieur*, (the Duke d'Anjou, now Duke d'Orleans), etiquette not permitting the young king to have an interview with his bride before a given moment; and attended by Mesdames de Flex and

[1] Louis XIV, sa Cour, et le Regent.

[2] Mémoires de Madame de Motteville.

de Noailles. She was soon followed by her royal brother and the bride, and the meeting between these long-severed relatives was stately and dignified. Anne of Austria, indeed, in whom the sister for a moment overcame the sovereign, endeavoured to salute the Spanish king upon the cheek, but he held back his head so rigidly that she could not succeed.

The young queen then threw herself upon her knees before her, and requested permission to kiss her hand; upon which Anne of Austria lifted her affectionately from the floor, and embraced her with great tenderness. The conversation that ensued was kind, heartfelt, and earnest on the part of the queen-mother; but Philip never relaxed for a moment in his stateliness. After some time had elapsed the Cardinal Mazarin approached Their Majesties, and informed them that a stranger was at the door, who requested that it might be opened to him; when Anne of Austria, with the consent of the king her brother, desired that the visitor might be admitted.

Mazarin and Don Louis had left the door partially thrown back in order that the king might see his bride; and as it was desirable that she should also see him, they were careful not to impede her view, which was the more easy as he was a head taller than either of the ministers. As her son approached, the colour of the queen-mother rose, and the infanta having met his eye, blushed deeply; while Philip remarked with a gracious smile, that he had a handsome son-in-law.

The suite of the Spanish king consisted of Don Louis de Haro, his prime minister, Don Pedro of Arragon, captain of the Bourgignon guard, the Marquis d'Aytonne,

the Marquis de Malepique, grand master of the ceremonies, the Marshal de Leche and the Count de Monserci, both sons of Don Louis de Haro, Don Fernando Vonès-de Canto-Carrero, secretary of state, and Senhors Pimentel and Velasquez. Louis XIV. was accompanied by the queen-mother, *Monsieur* Duke d'Orleans, the Prince de Conti, Cardinal Mazarin, and numerous great officers of the crown and kingdom; among whom were the Vicomte de Turenne, who had recently been appointed marshal-general of the camps and armies of the king; and the marshal Duke de Grammont, who had visited Madrid to demand the hand of the Infanta.[1]

The infanta-queen was attired in a robe of white satin embroidered with bugles, and wore a hoop. Her hair was simply dressed, and adorned with a bouquet of pear-shaped emeralds mingled with brilliants, which were a present from her royal bridegroom. On casting his eyes over the suite of Louis, the King of Spain remarked M. de Turenne, and repeated several times: "There is a man who has caused me many uneasy hours." A reminiscence which considerably annoyed the marshal.[2]

When Louis XIV. had advanced to the centre of the saloon, the two kings placed themselves in front of their respective tables, and cushions were brought to each; after which the cardinal came forward, bearing a copy of the gospel with a cross resting upon the volume, while the patriarch of India acted similarly on the Spanish side; both being in full costume. This done, the two sovereigns knelt; M. de Brienne, French secretary of

[1] Le Comte Alexandre de Laborde.

[2] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

state, then took the treaty of peace, and Don Fernando Vonès-de Canto-Carrero, who held the same distinguished rank in Spain, did the same; and each read it aloud in his own language. At its conclusion the royal allies laid their hands upon the gospel, and took their oaths to observe its contents; after which they both rose, and advancing at an equal pace to the division of the apartment, exchanged an embrace, which Louis XIV. gracefully followed up by the assurance that he pledged himself not only to peace but to friendship. When some further courtesies had been reciprocated, they moved side by side to the upper end of the table, where Don Fernando Vonès presented the Spanish retinue to the King of France, and the cardinal made the French suite known to the King of Spain. At the close of this ceremony each monarch retired to his closet to sign the treaty, and reappeared in the great saloon, where Philip IV. remarked to the queen-mother that as it was growing late, he would return to the island-palace on the following day at three o'clock. After this announcement the two courts separated.[1]

On the morrow the queen-mother returned alone to the island, desiring MADEMOISELLE and the ladies of her household to await her in her apartments, in order to receive the young queen, who was to reside with her for a couple of days; after which the marriage was celebrated in the church of St. Jean-de-Luz. A raised platform extended from the residence of Anne of Austria to the entrance of the church, which was richly carpeted. The young queen was robed in a royal mantle of violet-coloured velvet, powdered with fleurs-de-lis, over a white

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

dress, and wore a crown upon her head. Her train was carried by Mesdemoiselles d'Alençon and de Valois,[1] and the Princess de Carignan. After the ceremony the queen complained of fatigue, and retired for a few hours to her chamber, where she dined alone. In the evening she received the court, dressed in the French style: and gold and silver tokens, commemorative of the royal marriage, were profusely showered from the windows of her apartment.

All her Spanish retinue, including the Countess de Pleigo, her camarara-mayor, then took their leave, and departed for Spain, with the exception of five individuals; her confessor, her physician, her surgeon, her first-waiting woman, Malina, who had served the queen her mother in the same capacity; and the nephew of the latter, who had married one of her femmes-de-chambre.

On the 15th of June the court left St. Jean-de-Luz for Paris; and at Toulouse, the Duke de Grammont, after the successful termination of his mission to Madrid, received the compliments of the royal circle; and presented to the king the Marquis de Péguilain,[2] his nephew, a young officer who had distinguished himself in the last campaign. His personal advantages, his cheerful disposition, his brilliant conversation, and, above all, his tact in dispensing those frank and apparently unpremeditated flatteries which are so welcome to sovereigns, so won upon the young king, that Louis at once determined to attach him to his person by all the attractions of court favour.

At Amboise the royal party were met by the Prince de

[1] The younger daughters of Gaston.

[2] Afterwards Duke de Lauzun.

Condé, who came to present his son, the Duke d'Enghien. At Chambord the Duke de Longueville paid his respects in his turn; and lastly, at Fontainebleau, the Duke de Lorraine and the Duke de Guise awaited the arrival of the king and queen to pay their homage. Thence the illustrious *cortège* reached Vincennes, where they remained until the preparations were completed for their solemn entrance into the capital, which ultimately took place on the 26th of August.

On the occasion of his marriage the king had hastened to recall from banishment both the Count de Vivonne and the Marquis de Mancini; and poor Mary, in her exile at Brouage, wept with joy to hear that her dearly-loved brother had been chosen for the honour of bearing the train of MADEMOISELLE, even although it was at the nuptials of the only man whom she had ever loved; for she saw in this distinction an earnest of his future favour.

For herself she had no longer anything to hope: the past was as a brilliant dream from which the present was a mere troubled waking. She looked around upon the dreary state by which she was environed, and tried to condense her secret thoughts, and to fix them on the familiar objects amid which she tried to believe that she was destined to wear away her life. Until within a week of the royal marriage, she had occasionally received letters from Louis; and if they were not what they had once been, still she struggled to close her eyes against the fact; but since the Infanta had become Queen of France, no communication had reached her. This was as it should be, she argued to her own heart—the passion which had formerly been her glory could now only be her shame. It was right that he should forget her,

as he had done. But when the bruised heart spoke in its turn, she buried her burning face in her spread hands, and thought what a boon it would be to die.

Mademoiselle de Mancini dwelt only on the broad outline of her misfortune; she did not waste a thought upon its details; and even had she heard of the new courtier whom the pleasure-loving Louis had attached to his train at Toulouse, she would not have suspected for an instant that he could possess the power further to embitter her destiny. And yet so it was: since the banishment of Vivonne and Mancini, the young king had only the faithful Prince de Marsillac about his person to whom he was willing to confide those secrets which at his age are considered as so important; and even this confidence availed him little, for the prince could only listen and lament. He did not possess sufficient courage to offer an opinion which might chance to give offence; and thus Louis soon wearied of a sympathy which, however sincere, was never suggestive.

At such a moment, therefore, M. de Péguilain was doubly welcome; towards the two recently reconciled culprits the king was anxious not to exhibit a too marked attachment, lest by so doing he might create jealousy and disaffection among his other courtiers; while as regarded the new favourite he was under no such restriction; and as de Péguilain was too clever not to perceive in an instant the error of the Prince de Marsillac, he at once adopted a diametrically opposite line of conduct, whose very novelty increased the predilection of Louis in his favour. He even dared to blame where he disapproved; but he did it with a grace which invested the error with a sort of kingly virtue

that flattered the vanity and self-appreciation of the young monarch, even although it convinced him of his fault; while where he had only to applaud, he based his praises upon such high and dignified grounds that they assumed a double value.

It was not long therefore, under these circumstances, ere Louis confided to him all the details of his passion for Mary de Mancini; a passion which, although chilled and diminished by recent circumstances, was still far from being wholly overcome; and the subtle Péguilain, desirous to remove so dangerous a rival from the mind and affections of his royal master, employed his most crafty arguments to uproot the lingering remains of so formidable a preference. He urged nothing on the ground of morality, for he felt that such a position was untenable in the atmosphere of a court; but he adduced his own example, and that of some of the most gallant nobles of the kingdom, to prove that constancy was a chimera fit only to be entertained by boys and prudes. Day after day these conversations were renewed; and if they failed to convince his auditor, they at least served to shake his faith both in his own sentiments, and in the merits of Mademoiselle de Mancini; and hence the utter silence on his part which supervened.

Such was the position of the former lovers, when Madame de Venelle received an order from the cardinal to conduct his nieces to Paris; asserting that the queen-mother, who had graciously expressed her regret that Mary had not been present at the royal marriage, was anxious that she should at least partake of the festivities which were consequent upon them; as well as the entry of the young queen into the capital. To Mademoiselle

de Mancini this order was like a death-pang, but she well knew that there was no possibility of resistance; and she accordingly set forth upon her journey with a heart full of despair and bitterness. As she advanced towards the capital, deaf to the joyous acclamations of her young sisters, to whom a return to the pleasures of the court was as the opening of a new paradise, she saw at the entrance of every town and hamlet the preparations which were making to welcome the young queen; the triumphal arches, the windows garlanded with flowers, and the many-coloured lamps forming the cipher of the new deity; while, more than once, the crowd recognising the livery of Mazarin, had stopped the carriage to ask tidings of the progress of the royal party.

The heart of Mary bled at every pore, and when at length she alighted at the new palace of the cardinal,[1] she hastened to shut herself into her apartment, in order to indulge her despair in solitude and silence.

Mazarin, anticipating some outbreak on the part of the unhappy girl upon an occasion of such bitter trial, resolved to seize the opportunity of offering to her at that moment a brilliant marriage, which would place her beyond the comments of the court; and a letter was accordingly put into her hands, immediately after her arrival in Paris, in which he informed her that the Constable Prince Colonna had asked her hand, and implored her to reflect seriously before she renounced the prospect of becoming one of the greatest ladies in Rome.

But Mazarin did not understand his niece. The moment which he had considered to be so favourable was precisely one in which Mary, who felt that her

[1] Now the Royal Library.

dignity had been compromised by others, was more than ever resolved to uphold it in her own person. She consequently lost no time in returning a cold and positive refusal to the proposition; and thus proved that she was equal to the emergency, cruel as it might be.

The communication of the cardinal was followed by a second from the Duchess de Noailles, in which she announced the arrival of the court at Fontainebleau, where the principal persons of the kingdom were to be presented to the young queen previously to her entry into Paris; and in this list the names of Mary and her sisters having been inscribed, the duchess wrote to inform her that they would have the honour of being presented by the Countess de Soissons their sister, and the Princess de Conti their cousin, on the ensuing Sunday, immediately after the high mass.

When Mademoiselle de Mancini reached Fontainebleau, every one was struck by the alteration in her person; they had one and all forgotten to estimate the extent of her sufferings; and, as though everything conspired to render her trial the more difficult to bear, just as she had begun to congratulate herself on hearing that the king had walked into the park to inspect the recent improvements of Le Notre;[1] and had with tolerable firmness joined her sister, and advanced towards the queen, Louis entered the hall of audience to request Maria Theresa to accompany him in a second survey.

[1] Andrew Le Notre, born at Paris in 1613, became architect and landscape-gardener to the king. He designed the grounds of Marly, Trianon, Chantilly, St. Cloud, the Tuileries, and the Terrace of St. Germain. In 1675 Louis XIV. conferred upon him letters of nobility, and the cross of St. Lazarus. He died in 1700.

It chanced that at that precise moment the Countess de Soissons was in the act of presenting Mademoiselle de Mancini; and as she was named, the king bowed without one vestige of emotion or sign of recognition; inquired after the health of the cardinal, who had been detained at Vincennes by the gout; exchanged a few words with Madame de Soissons; and then turned away to salute the other ladies who were passing before the queen, to each of whom he addressed some remark or compliment with the same condescending indifference.

Mary felt that she could bear no more. The whole brilliant scene swam before her eyes, but she could not distinguish objects; and, suddenly rousing herself from an emotion which she felt would expose her to the merciless railleries of the circle, she withdrew a little apart in order to rally her scattered senses. The affectionate greeting of the queen-mother added a fresh pang to her wretchedness; for it was so marked that she at once felt the security which it implied. She was no longer feared. Louis had then indeed ceased to love her.

When the presentations had terminated, the king invited all the ladies of the circle to attend the queen at a hunt in which she was about to join; and as every one rose, Mademoiselle de Mancini, eager to escape the scene of her torture, announced to the Princess de Conti that she had just received news of the aggravated illness of the cardinal, which compelled her immediately to depart for Vincennes.

At some distance from the château, she was compelled to halt, in order to allow the queen and her train to pass; and thus she again saw Louis, who preceded the cavalcade on horseback surrounded by all the nobles

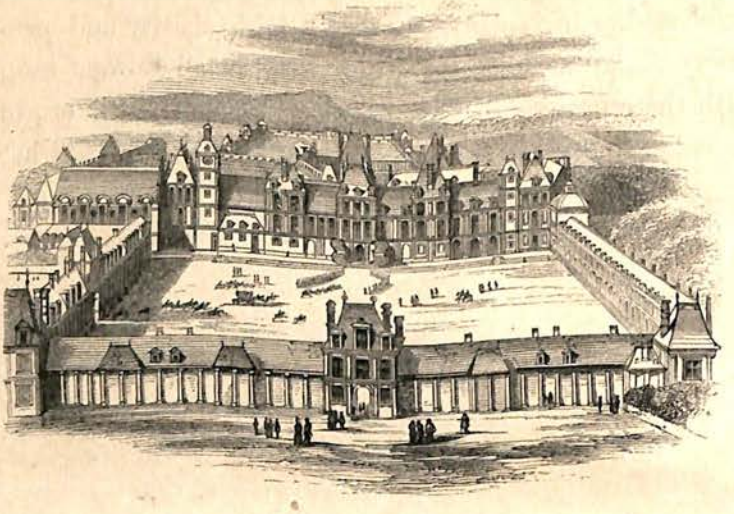
of his court, and conversing with the Marquis de Péguilain. The heart of Mary throbbed almost to bursting; it was impossible that the king should not recognise the livery of her uncle—the carriage in which he had so often been seated by her side—he would not—he could not pass her by, without one word. She deceived herself. His Majesty was laughing at some merry tale of his new favourite, by which he was so much engrossed that he rode on, without bestowing even a look upon the gilded coach and its heart-broken occupant.

On the morrow, pale, cold, and tearless, Mademoiselle de Mancini drove to Vincennes, where she announced to the cardinal that she was ready to give her hand to the Prince Colonna, provided the marriage took place immediately, and that he wrote without an hour's delay to ask the consent of the king. Mazarin, delighted to have thus carried his point after having despaired of success, at once promised to comply with her wishes; and Mary returned to Paris as self-sustained as she had left it; although, perhaps, not without a latent hope that her resolution would awaken some return of affection in the breast of Louis; induce some remonstrance; elicit some token of remembrance.

Again, however, she was the victim of her own hope. The royal consent was granted without a single comment, accompanied by valuable presents which she dared not decline; and Mary walked to the altar as she would have walked to the scaffold, carrying with her an annual dowry of a hundred thousand livres, and perjuring herself by vows which she could not fulfil.

Her after-career we dare not trace. Suffice it that the ardent and enthusiastic spirit which would, had she been

fated to happiness, have made her memory a triumph for her sex, embittered by falsehood, wrong, and treachery, involved her in errors over which both charity and propriety oblige us to draw a veil; and if all Europe rang with the enormity of her excesses, much of their origin may surely be traced to those who, after wringing her heart, trampled it in the dust beneath their feet.



CHAPTER XII.

THE STATE-ENTRY INTO THE CAPITAL—POPULARITY OF MAZARIN—MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCESS MARGUERITE OF SAVOY, AND THE PRINCE OF PARMA—INDIGNATION OF THE FRENCH COURT—A RIVAL COURT—THE SALOONS OF MADAME DE SOISSONS—FIRE AT THE LOUVRE—MAZARIN CONDEMNED BY HIS PHYSICIANS—HIS SUDDEN GENEROSITY—HIS EASY CHAIR—HORTENSIA DE MANCINI AFFIANCED TO THE DUKE DE LA MEILLERAIE—HE ASSUMES THE NAME OF MAZARIN—MARIANNE DE MANCINI AFFIANCED TO THE DUKE DE BOUILLON—IMPROVIDENCE OF THE SISTERS—REMORSE OF THE CARDINAL—MAZARIN AND THE THÉATINE MONK—THE AFFECTED DONATION—THE DEATH-TOILETTE—LAST ADVICE TO THE KING—PRESENTATION OF COLBERT—DEATH OF MAZARIN—DEPARTURE OF LOUIS XIV. AND THE QUEEN-MOTHER FOR PARIS—THE KING RULES IN HIS OWN PERSON—THE CARDINAL'S WILL—INDIFFERENCE OF HIS FAMILY—MAZARIN AT THE GAMING TABLE—THE GAMBLING DEBT.

SHORTLY after the presentation at Fontainebleau the king and queen entered Paris in state; and throughout the entire day the streets presented only one long, and brilliant, and unbroken procession. At four o'clock in the morning every one was astir; and at five, all the ladies were in full costume, wearing their mantles of ceremony, which they had no opportunity of throwing off until

seven o'clock in the evening, notwithstanding the intense heat. The whole court were grouped about a throne, which had been erected at the barrier, and on which the young queen received the salutations of the several bodies of the state, before making her entry into the city. Neither the form nor colour of the houses before which the procession was to pass could be distinguished, so profusely were they decorated with hangings of tapestry, and bright-tinted cloths; while the ground was thickly overstrown with flowers and sweet-scented herbs, upon which the carriages moved without noise, extracting, as their heavy wheels crushed out the juices of the perfumed carpet beneath them, a thousand delicate odours. The queen, in all the glory of her youth and beauty, glittering with jewels and beaming with smiles, was borne forward in an antique car blazing with gold, beside which rode her royal consort, attired in a suit of velvet embroidered with gems, estimated at between seven and eight millions.

The queen-mother, accompanied by the queen of England and the Princess Henrietta, occupied the house of Madame de Beauvais, within the city, where they awaited the termination of the preparatory ceremonies. The most magnificent feature of the whole procession was, however, the household of the cardinal, which was numerous and splendid, totally eclipsing by its marvellous pomp that of *Monsieur*; in short, so regal in its profusion, that the Count d'Estrées,[1] not being altogether

[1] John d'Estrées, born in Picardy in 1624, originally embraced the military profession, and was appointed lieutenant-general in 1655. Created vice-admiral of France, duke and peer, he was commissioned to demand from the English an explanation of the spolia-

able to excuse its overwhelming assumption, could find no other terms in which to describe it, than by styling it a display of *ostentatious simplicity*.

This period must be considered as the culminating point of Mazarin's prosperity. The people by whom he had been driven from the capital, and who had put a price upon his head, received him with acclamations. The magistrates who had fulminated the decree hastened to offer him their homage. The king acquiesced in all his wishes with the docility of a pupil, conscious that he owed much of his present power to his able and zealous policy. He refused to give his hand to the princes of the blood in the third degree, as he had formerly done; and he who had been treated by Don Louis de Haro as an equal, assumed to consider the Great Condé as an inferior. Like his predecessor, the Cardinal de Richelieu, he maintained the same military household as the king himself; and was surrounded by guards, gendarmes, and light horse; with, moreover, the addition of a company of musketeers which bore his name, all commanded by nobles, having young men of quality serving under them.[1] He was no longer accessible as he had once been; and any one who was ill-advised enough to ask a favour of the king personally, was certain of failure; while the queen-mother, by whom he had so long been

tions which they were committing in the French possessions in America. In 1672, his vessels, in conjunction with those of England, overcame the naval forces of the Dutch admirals, Ruyter and Tromp. On his return from this expedition he was made Marshal of France, and despatched in pursuit of the corsairs of Tunis and Tripoli. Ultimately he received the command of the coasts of Brittany, and died in 1707.

[1] Mémoires du Duc de St. Simon.

upheld, through good and evil fortune, against the whole sense of the kingdom, became a mere cipher from the moment in which he ceased to require her protection.

One check, however, the haughty cardinal was destined to receive, even in the hour of his triumph; and that one came from the long-persecuted Stuart. Charles II. had solicited the hand of Mary de Mancini when he was a wandering exile; and it had been abruptly, and even superciliously denied. Mazarin had no sympathy with unthroned and wandering monarchs; but when the united voices of a great nation summoned Charles to take possession of his birthright, the spirit of the ambitious cardinal yearned to clutch the recovered crown, and to place it upon the head of one of his nieces. He accordingly made known his change of resolution to the English king, offering him at the same time a dowry of five millions of livres if he would raise Mary to the throne of England; but Charles spurned at the indelicacy of the proposal; and Mazarin forthwith encouraged the pretensions of the Romish prince, to whom he ultimately married his unhappy niece.

The position of Mazarin necessarily secured suitors to the remainder of those young girls, of whom, on their first appearance at court, the Marshal de Villeroi had uttered so brilliant a prophecy; and among these were the Dukes of Lorraine and Savoy, who alike careless of receiving a dowry with their brides, asked only that one fortified town on the borders of each principality, should be placed under his own authority. This proposition Mazarin, however, absolutely rejected, considering such a concession dangerous to the interests of France; and the princes accordingly withdrew their claim.

While the negotiations were proceeding at the Isle of Pheasants, a marriage had however taken place, which excited great indignation at the French court. The Princess Marguerite of Savoy, smarting under the indignity which had been cast upon her at Lyons, and foreseeing that an alliance was inevitable between Louis XIV. and the Infanta, had, somewhat abruptly, bestowed her hand upon the Prince of Parma; an event which filled all the courtiers of France with astonishment. They could not comprehend how a princess, who had ever entertained a hope of sharing the throne of Louis XIV, could abase herself to marry a mere sovereign prince. They considered this step as an immense dereliction from dignity, corresponding but little with the haughty self-respect she had evinced upon the rupture of her marriage with the French king, and which had been a theme of general praise; and they at once decided that, after having been encouraged to raise her eyes to such a height as that of the French throne, she should never have condescended to marry elsewhere, and would have been better advised had she retired into a convent. They forgot that she possessed all the pride of a woman as well as the dignity of a princess; and that nothing remained to her save to prove that although she might have writhed under an insult, it had failed to crush her.

In Paris, meanwhile, all was gaiety and splendour; and the whole winter was consumed in one round of never-ceasing dissipation, of which the two queens were, however, the least interested partakers. Anne of Austria was gradually becoming more and more devout, and consequently less able to appreciate the pleasures of the world; while Maria Theresa, naturally timid, was ill at

ease in the midst of a numerous and brilliant court. The natural consequence ensued; another circle more consonant to the tastes and habits of the fastidious courtiers was soon formed; and the most distinguished members of the nobility, both male and female, revenged themselves upon the monotonous and rigid ceremony of the royal festivals, by constantly frequenting the saloons of the Countess de Soissons; who, as superintendent of the queen's household (to which exalted post she had been appointed by the cardinal at the period of the Infanta's marriage), had apartments in the Tuileries; where, by her profuse expenditure, her wit, and above all her unconquerable audacity, she soon succeeded in making her circle the centre of gallantry, plotting, and intrigue.

The principal feature of her receptions was the perfect freedom which they permitted; all the guests being more or less connected, and all strangers resolutely excluded; and there Louis XIV, feeling, like his courtiers, the charm of an utter freedom from restraint which he could never enjoy in his own apartments, spent evening after evening; unconsciously acquiring that grace and ease of manner by which he was so eminently distinguished in after life.[1] His vanity and his ambition had been alike flattered by an alliance with the crown of Spain, and these, superadded to the youthful beauty of his wife, had deceived him for a time into the belief that he returned an affection which on her part was at once ardent and sincere; but he soon awakened from the happy illusion, and discovered that the void in his heart left by the absence of Mary de Mancini, was by no means supplied.

[1] Mémoires du Duc de St. Simon.

In the midst of these courtly diversions, the cardinal, hourly sinking as he was in health, determined to invite the king and queen to a grand ballet, which should transcend all that had yet been seen at Paris; and he accordingly caused the Gallery of Kings to be decorated with columns of gold serge on a ground of red and green, which had been manufactured at Milan; but, in the course of hanging these costly draperies, they by some means took fire; and the magnificent roof of the gallery, painted by Fremine, and representing Henry IV. under the figure of Jupiter exterminating the Titans, was utterly destroyed; as well as all the royal portraits executed by Janet and Porbus.[1]

This shock overcame the cardinal, who considered it as an evil omen; and made no effort to escape, until he was aroused from his stupor by the captain of his guard, who supported him with some difficulty from the room, pale, trembling, and terrified to such an excess, that those who saw him under the influence of this morbid horror at once felt that its result must be fatal. The apartment in which he had been sitting was in flames an instant after he had been removed. He was conveyed to the Mazarin palace, where his physician was instantly summoned, and had no sooner ascertained the state of his patient, than he called in eleven of his professional brethren; and when the consultation had terminated, at once returned to the sick-chamber, and announced to the cardinal that although science might enable them to prolong his existence for a

[1] Peter Porbus was a native of Ghent, who established himself at Bruges, where he acquired considerable reputation. The portrait of St. Hubert at Ghent, and that of the Duke d'Alençon at Antwerp, are esteemed as his best works. He died in 1583.

certain period, his malady was beyond cure, and must, ere very long, terminate fatally.

Mazarin received this intelligence with more firmness than could have been anticipated; and merely requested to be informed with equal frankness of the probable duration of his life. On being told that he might still survive a couple of months, he replied that two months would suffice for all that he had yet to accomplish; and bade the physician leave him, and during his absence consider how he could best further his fortunes; after which he retired to his closet to meditate upon the great change that awaited him.

Some days afterwards he sent to request that *Monsieur* would pay him a visit, and during the interview presented him with fifty thousand crowns; and thenceforward every one was convinced that he felt his end to be rapidly approaching.

His weakness increased hour by hour; while the declaration of Guénaud that he had only two months more to live, was continually present to him by day, and haunted his dreams by night. On one occasion when Brienne[1] entered his chamber on tiptoe, the valet-de-chambre of His Eminence having warned him that his master was dozing in an arm-chair beside the fire, the visitor discovered that he was convulsed with agitation, although evidently in a profound sleep. His body rocked to and fro, impelled by its own weight; and his head swung from the back of his chair to his knees, as he flung himself to

[1] Henry Augustus, Count de Brienne, who died in 1666, leaving behind him his Memoirs, commencing at the accession of Louis XIV, and terminating at the death of Mazarin. Originally secretary to the cardinal, he afterwards became an ambassador, and minister for foreign affairs.

the right and left incessantly; and during the lapse of five minutes that M. de Brienne continued to watch his movements, he asserts that the pendulum of a clock did not vibrate more rapidly than the frame of the sufferer. At intervals he uttered a few words, but in so low and choked a voice that they were unintelligible; and at length Brienne, unable longer to endure so wretched a spectacle, and fearful lest the sick man should fall into the fire, summoned his attendant from the antechamber to his assistance.

As he was aroused from his troubled sleep, the cardinal betrayed the secret which was preying upon his vitals; the name of his physician, and the period of existence which had been assigned to him, were the first sounds that escaped his livid lips; and when those about him endeavoured to cheer him by the remark that Guénaud was only mortal, and his judgment consequently fallible, he answered with a heavy sigh, that Guénaud understood his trade!

Yet still, despite this moral and physical prostration, the indomitable minister turned his attention to the establishment of his remaining nieces; and affianced Hortensia, the most beautiful of the two, to the Duke de la Meilleraie, grand-master of the king's household, on condition that he should assume the name of Mazarin; with an annual income of fifteen hundred thousand livres, and immense personal effects. To Marianne, who was yet a child, he moreover bequeathed a sufficient dowry to enable her to enter the family of Bouillon when her age should permit her to do so; while, as regarded the Princess de Conti and the Countess de Soissons, he had already secured to the former the superintendence of the

household of the queen-mother, and to the latter that of the reigning queen. Hortensia, to whom, despite the affection which he had long felt for her, he had always denied everything beyond common necessaries, herself relates the delight which she experienced when, so soon as her marriage had been determined on, her uncle called her into his cabinet; and, in addition to a splendid *trousseau*, presented to her a casket containing ten thousand pistoles in gold. The cardinal had no sooner left her at liberty to examine her new acquisitions than she sent for her brother the Marquis de Mancini, and her sister Marianne, and desired them to take what they pleased. All the trio then filled their pockets; and as, when they had done this, there still remained about three hundred louis in the casket, they opened the windows, and threw them into the court of the palace, in order that the lacqueys who were assembled there might scramble for the prize.

This adventure soon reached the ears of the cardinal, and the ingratitude and folly which it exhibited added another pang to his dying hours, which had already become embittered by a sudden remorse on the subject of his enormous wealth. The Cardinal de Richelieu, a man of high birth and ancient family, had felt that he had a right to possess a princely revenue; but Mazarin, whose origin was at best equivocal, and who had been the architect of his own fortunes, at whose extent he learnt to shudder in the solitude of a death-chamber, became terrified as he reflected that he was able to bequeath more than forty millions to his family. His confessor, a conscientious Théatine monk,[1] startled like himself at the

[1] The Théatines were a religious order, instituted in 1524 by St. Gaétan de Thienne, Peter Caraffa, Bishop of Théato, afterwards

unheard-of amount of his wealth, which Mazarin mentioned in the course of his confession, allowing that he considered it as a sin; at once declared that His Eminence would be damned if he did not forthwith make restitution of that portion of the money which had been ill acquired; to which the cardinal rejoined that he owed all to the bounty of the king. The honest ecclesiastic was not to be deceived, however, by such a compromise with principle; and retorted, with the same firmness, that the cardinal must compel himself to distinguish between what he had actually received from the sovereign as a free gift, and what he had himself appropriated; upon which Mazarin, in despair at such an announcement, declared that in that case he must restore the whole. He then reflected for an instant; and desired that M. Colbert might be immediately sent to his apartment.

When Colbert had obeyed the summons, the cardinal confided to him the difficulty which had arisen; and the former at once advised, in order to remove his scruples, and to prevent his immense fortune from passing away

pope under the name of Paul IV, and several other distinguished persons. Clement VII. sanctioned the institution in 1529, under the name of regular clerks: a novel description of priests, living in a community, and forming different societies or congregations, some of which exacted solemn vows, others merely simple ones, and others again from whom no vow whatever was required. The Théatines were the first community who bore the appellation. The name of Théatines was given to them in consequence of the Bishop of Théato having been one of their founders. They wore a black frock, a black cloak, and white stockings. They undertook to reform the clergy, to instruct the young, to nurse the sick, and to contend against heretics. Throughout all France they possessed only one establishment, which was situated in Paris. Their order was suppressed and their convent destroyed in 1790. The Théatines produced many individuals who distinguished themselves both by their science and their virtues.

from his family, that he should make a donation of all that he possessed to the king, who would not fail in his royal generosity to annul the act at once. Mazarin approved the expedient; and on the 3d of March the necessary document was prepared; but three days having elapsed without the restoration of his property, he became the victim of a thousand fears; and as he sat in his chair he wrung his hands with agony. The wealth for which he had toiled and sinned; which he had wrenched alike from the voluptuous noble and the industrious artizan, had, as he believed, passed away from him for ever. The labour of his life was rendered of none avail; and the curses which he had accumulated upon his own head had failed even to gild his tomb. "My poor family!" he exclaimed, at intervals; "my poor family! They will be left without bread."

This bitter suspense was not, however, fated to be of long duration. On the third day from the transmission of the deed of gift, Colbert entered his chamber radiant with success, and placed the recovered document in his hands, with the intelligence that the king had definitively refused to accept the offering; and that he authorized the minister to dispose of all his property as he should see fit. On receiving this assurance, the worthy Théatine declared himself satisfied, and at once bestowed the absolution which he had previously withheld; and he had no sooner done so than Mazarin drew from beneath his bolster a will which he had already prepared, and delivered it to Colbert.

A week before his death a singular whim seized the sick man; he caused himself to be shaved, his mustachios to be trimmed, and covered his cheeks with red and

white paint, to a degree which rendered his complexion more fresh and brilliant than it had ever been during his period of health. He then entered his chair, and made a tour of the gardens despite the cold February wind, to the great astonishment of the courtiers who were dispersed in the avenues; but the effort was beyond his strength, and he soon fell back upon his pillows, desiring that he might be conveyed to his apartment.[1]

Meanwhile the king continued to pursue his usual amusements, dancing in the different ballets, and supping with the queen-mother; but the illness of the minister at length became so grave that all business was suspended. The marriage of Hortensia had taken place, but necessarily without any of those festivities by which it would, under other circumstances have been attended; and her husband had at once assumed the name of Duke de Mazarin.

From the time that the cardinal received the last sacraments, the courtiers were excluded from his chamber; and ingress was forbidden to all save the king, the queen, and M. de Colbert. During one of his visits, Louis entreated that the minister would give him whatever advice he might deem desirable; declaring his intention to profit by it to the utmost.

"Sire," said the dying man; "know how to respect yourself, and you will be respected; never have a prime minister; and employ M. de Colbert whenever you require the assistance of an adviser at once intelligent and devoted."

It was on this occasion also that he made use of nearly

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

the same words in which, as we have mentioned elsewhere, he was himself presented by the Cardinal Bentivoglio to the Cardinal Barberino: "I owe everything to you, Sire; but I believe that I cancel my obligation to Your Majesty by giving you Colbert."

Ultimately the cardinal expired early in the morning of the 9th of March, "more like a philosopher than a Christian,"[1] at the age of fifty-two; having ruled the kingdom of France during a period of eighteen years. He was scarcely regretted even by those whose fortunes he had founded; neither the king nor the queen-mother made any show of grief beyond the first few days; and so little was either really affected by the decease of the man, who had, whatever might be the other vices of his administration, raised France to a high and dignified station among the nations of Europe; that Louis on awaking in the morning, no sooner ascertained his death, than he immediately rose, and summoned Letellier, Fouquet, and Lionne to a secret council, in which he informed them of his future intentions; after which he had an interview with the queen-mother, with whom he dined; and subsequently left Vincennes, where the court were then residing, in a close carriage for Paris; while Anne of Austria, twice widowed in fact although not in heart, followed in a chair with bearers, attended by the Marquis de Beaufort, her first equerry, and Nogent-Bautru, her jester, who enlivened her journey by their unceasing gaiety.

The administration of the kingdom was regulated two days before the death of the cardinal according to his

[1] Louis XIV, sa Cour, et le Regent.

advice; and every arrangement had been already made when Harlai de Chanvalon, the president of the ecclesiastical assembly, waited upon the king to inquire to whom he must in future address himself on questions of public business, and received the concise reply, "*To Myself.*"

St. Simon asserts that it was doubtless the enormous wealth accumulated by the cardinal which decided Louis XIV. to dispense, throughout the remainder of his reign, with a prime minister; as well as to exclude all ecclesiastics from his council. Well, indeed, might he form such a resolution, for the fortune which Mazarin left behind him was colossal; and his will declared the disposal of fifty millions; while at the same time it strictly forbade an inventory of his personal effects.

His principal legatee was Armand Charles de Laporte, Marquis de la Meilleraie, Duke de Rethelois de Mazarin, to whom he bequeathed all that might remain of his property after the acquittal of the several legacies; and who never ascertained the exact amount of his inheritance in consequence of the interdict which the cardinal had laid upon the inventory; although he succeeded in convincing himself that it ranged between thirty-five and forty millions. The Princess de Conti, the Princess of Modena, the Princess de Vendôme, the Countess de Soissons, and the Princess Colonna, each received two hundred thousand crowns The Marshal de Mancini, who had anticipated the entire inheritance of his uncle, and who was consequently dissatisfied with his bequest, had for his portion the Duchy of Nevers, nine hundred thousand crowns in ready money, a yearly income derived from his estate of Brouage, the moiety of his personal effects, and all his property in Rome. To the Marshal de

Grammont he left a hundred thousand livres; and to Madame de Martinozzi his sister an annual income of eighteen thousand.

The special legacies were these: To the king, two cabinets filled with public records in an unfinished state; to the queen-mother, a brilliant estimated at a million of livres; to the reigning queen, a bouquet of diamonds; to *Monsieur*, sixty gold marks, a hanging of tapestry, and thirty emeralds; to Don Louis de Haro, the Spanish minister, a fine painting by Titian; to the Count de Feusaldagne, a large clock in a gold case; to His Holiness the Pope, six hundred thousand livres to be employed in the war against the Turks; to the poor, six thousand francs; and finally, to the crown, eighteen large diamonds, to be called the Mazarins.[1]

Upon a survey of the enormous wealth thus amassed by one man, during an administration of twenty years, for a great portion of which period the nation had been drained of its resources both by foreign and intestine war, it is scarcely surprising that the cardinal should have been anxious to conceal, as far as possible, the exact amount of which he had pillaged the people.

In 1630, he had barely emerged from obscurity, and had, for all fortune, his diplomatic subtlety and his indomitable ambition; while in 1661, he died possessed of a sum equal to two hundred millions of the money of the present day. He died unmourned even by his own family, every member of which he had raised to rank and opulence; for his avarice had counteracted the effect of his exertions. Each felt that he was striving

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

rather to exalt himself through them, than to benefit their individual fortunes; while they resented the parsimony which, after decorating them with a rank requiring a corresponding expenditure, left them in a position that prevented their upholding it with dignity. The results of such a system might have been foreseen; the Princess de Conti and the Duchess de Mercœur, from the fact of their having married shortly after their arrival in France, escaped its effects: but M. de Mancini and his remaining nieces became, so soon as they acquired the means, improvident and careless to a degree exceeding belief.

In short, the avarice of Mazarin had passed into a proverb; and both friends and enemies were subjected to its withering effects. Every circumstance afforded him a pretext for augmenting his hoards; and his favourite axiom whenever he was thwarted, of "They sing, they shall pay for it," was never once contradicted by his practice throughout his whole period of power. He is, moreover, accused by more than one authority of having stooped to measures degrading to his high rank in order to increase his property; and is even suspected of having shared with the privateers the profits of their ocean forays, although this fact was never fully proved; but the Dutch did not hesitate to brand him with a moral degradation which they would never have assigned to the Cardinal de Richelieu.

Mazarin felt no compunction in cheating at cards, which were at that period the ruling passion of the court; and, miser as he was, habitually risked the gain or loss of fifty thousand livres in a night; while, as a natural consequence, his temper ebbed and flowed with his fortune.

Perhaps the most amusing anecdote connected with his avarice, multitudinous as they were, was an equivoque which occurred only a few days before he breathed his last, and within an hour after he had obtained the absolution which his confessor had for a time withheld. The cardinal had just transmitted his will to Colbert when some one scratched at his door,[1] which having been interdicted, Bernouin, his confidential valet-de-chambre, dismissed the visitor.

"Who was there?" asked Mazarin, as his attendant returned to the bed-side.

"It was M. de Tebeuf, the president of the chamber of accounts;" replied Bernouin; "and I told him that Your Eminence could not be seen."

"Alas!" exclaimed the dying man; "what have you done: he owed me money, perhaps he came to pay it; call him back; call him back instantly."

M. de Tubeuf was overtaken in the anteroom and introduced. Nor had the cardinal deceived himself. He was indeed come to liquidate a heavy gambling debt; and Mazarin welcomed him with as bright a smile as though he had years of life before him in which to profit by his good fortune; took the hundred pistoles which he had brought in his hand, and asked for his jewel casket; which was placed upon the bed; when he deposited the coins in one of the compartments; and then began to examine with great interest the valuable gems which it contained.

[1] At this period bells were unknown in France, and every courtier carried in the pocket of his vest a small comb with steel teeth, with which he scratched against the door of the apartment where he desired to enter.

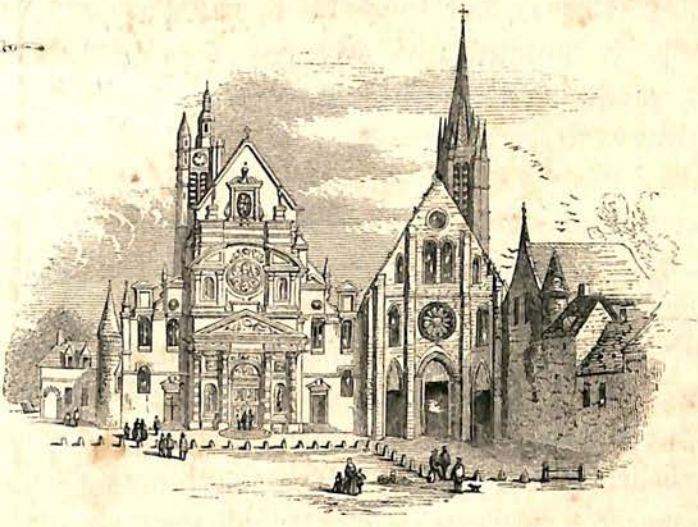
"You must give me leave, M. de Tubeuf;" he said with emphasis, as he lifted a fine brilliant and passed it rapidly across the light; "to offer to Madame de Tubeuf ——"

The president of accounts, believing that the cardinal, in acknowledgment of the heavy sums which he had from time to time gained at the card table on his account since he had been too ill to act for himself, was about to present him with the precious gem which he then held in his trembling fingers, moved a pace or two nearer to the bed with a smile upon his lips.

"To offer to Madame de Tubeuf ——" repeated the dying miser, still gazing upon the jewel:—"to offer to Madame de Tubeuf——my very best compliments." And as he ceased speaking he closed the casket, and made a sign that it should be removed.

Nothing remained for the discomfited courtier but to make his bow and depart; with the mortification of feeling that he had been for an instant so far the dupe of his own wishes, as to believe, that while he was yet alive, Jules de Mazarin could make up his mind to give away anything for which he had no prospect of receiving an equivalent.[1]

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE COURT-MOURNING—ACTIVE INTRIGUES—SUDDEN SELF-ASSUMPTION OF LOUIS XIV.—THE THREE MINISTERS—REVELATION OF COLBERT—LOUIS XIV. AT THREE AND TWENTY—MONSIEUR—HENRIETTA OF ENGLAND AFFIANCED TO MONSIEUR—DEPARTURE OF THE ENGLISH PRINCESSES FOR LONDON—IMPATIENCE OF MONSIEUR—ANNE OF AUSTRIA RETIRES FROM THE COURT—HER MALADY—RETURN OF THE QUEEN AND PRINCESS OF ENGLAND—THE PRINCESS HENRIETTA AND THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM—MARRIAGE OF THE DUKE D'ORLEANS—DAILY HABITS OF LOUIS XIV.—MUTUAL JEALOUSY OF THE YOUNG QUEEN AND MONSIEUR—HIDDEN MOTIVES OF MADAME—THE KING ATTACHES HIMSELF TO MADAME—ASTONISHMENT OF FOUQUET—THE DUCHESS DE NAVAILLES—HER REPARTÉE—MADEMOISELLE D'HOUDANCOURT—HIGH-HEARTEDNESS OF MADAME DE NAVAILLES—THE IRON GRATINGS—MADEMOISELLE DE LA VALLIÈRE.

In order to dissimulate as much as possible the general joy which was felt by all classes on the demise of the cardinal, the king resolved upon a general mourning. The order was unprecedented, for it compelled not only the court, but all the princes of the blood to assume a mourning garb for a minister who was himself neither a prince, nor related in the most remote degree to the royal family. There was, however, no alternative, for the

king and the two queens having given the example, nothing remained but to follow it; and the court was accordingly crowded with sable garments and smiling faces, producing an anomaly as striking as it was inconsistent.

The death of Mazarin filled the court with the wildest hopes, and the most active intrigue. The pretty women who figured in the royal circle flattered themselves that a prince of two and twenty, who had once been sufficiently the slave of his passions to offer his crown to a subject, might be easily governed under the influence of a new attachment; the younger of the courtiers indulged the belief that the reign of favouritism was about to recommence; while each of the ministers anticipated individual supremacy. Not one among all those who were the most intimately interested in the progress of events, suspected for a moment that Louis XIV, the deity of the court ballets, the slave of etiquette, and the unquestioning and supine pupil of an ambitious minister, would suddenly rouse himself from his moral lethargy, and take upon him the burthen of the government.

Nothing could more distinctly prove the error under which all the great functionaries laboured with regard to their young monarch, than the fact that not one of them demanded a personal audience of His Majesty; but that each inquired to whom he was in future to address himself. We have already stated that his answer was, "*To* MYSELF;" but even startled as they were by such a reply, they never anticipated that he would persevere in a resolution so dissonant to his habits. They had been accustomed to consider him only as the votary of pleasure; and they had yet to learn that for some time

past he had tried his strength, and resolved to fill worthily the exalted station which providence had assigned to him as a birthright. Determined to become in fact, as well as in name, the sovereign of France; and remembering, that both by precept and example Mazarin had warned him never again to subject himself to the despotism of a prime minister, he stringently defined the limits beyond which no public functionary might presume to act; and indicated to each the particular hour at which he was to report his proceedings to himself; giving to all the necessary power which alone could render their ministry effective; but watching over each, with a tenacity of attention that rendered any abuse of authority impossible, or at least dangerous.

We have already stated that, immediately on ascertaining the demise of Mazarin, Louis XIV. had summoned to his presence le Tellier, Lionne, and Fouquet; and they are personages too important to be passed over without a formal introduction to the reader.

Michel le Tellier, the war minister, was a man of handsome exterior and winning manners; timid in domestic life, but courageous and enterprising in politics. Tolerably firm in pursuing measures once adopted; but, nevertheless, better calculated to follow than to lead. His greatest dread was that of becoming unpopular; and he was, perhaps, encouraged in this somewhat weak alarm by the consciousness that he was himself a dangerous enemy. He was mild and insinuating; always profuse in promises, which he was equally ready to forget; and eminently courteous and accessible; but his regard did not extend beyond these professions. His utter want of ambition was exhibited in a piece of advice which he

offered to the king on the subject of the Chancellor Seguier, who was anxious to be elevated to the rank of a duke and peer. "Such exalted dignity, Sire;" he replied, when consulted by Louis XIV; "does not beseem the learned professions; it is good policy to accord them only to military prowess." A decision which blighted all the exertions and hopes of his eldest son, (Louvois,) who never succeeded, despite his eminent services, in effacing from the mind of his royal master the remark made by his father, who had assuredly never reflected on the probable consequences of such an opinion in his own family. Louvois was the victim of this unguarded aphorism; but Seguier was eventually exempted from its influence, for he ultimately obtained the coveted rank which was denied to the able son of the minister.[1]

Hughes de Lionne was a gentleman of Dauphiny, and

[1] Michel le Tellier was the son of a councillor of the *Cour des Aides* (exchequer); and was born in Paris in the year 1603. He was, in the first place, a councillor of the grand council; then (in 1631) king's advocate at the Chatelet of Paris, and master of requests. Appointed steward of Piedmont in 1640, he secured the favour of Mazarin, who made him war-secretary of state; and to whose interests he remained attached throughout the whole of the civil war. He was entrusted with all the negotiations between the court and the rebel princes; especially Gaston d'Orleans and the Prince de Condé; and it was by his influence that the treaty of Ruel was ultimately concluded. After having been the minister of Anne of Austria during her regency, he continued to serve Louis XIV. in the same capacity. He co-operated with Colbert in the overthrow of the superintendent Fouquet; and obtained for his son, the Marquis de Louvois, the survivorship of his office as secretary of state. In 1677 he was made chancellor and keeper of the seals; and in this trust he exhibited a zeal both vigilant and active. He was one of the principal movers of the revocation of the edict of Nantes. He died in 1685.

a more able diplomatist than his colleague le Tellier; a fact which was so well known to all the foreign ministers, that they redoubled their caution when compelled to treat with him personally. Whenever a necessity for exertion arose, de Lionne was indefatigable, and fulfilled his arduous duties with a zeal and an ability almost unequalled; but the crisis once passed, he again turned all his energies towards those sensual pleasures to which he was a willing slave; and sacrificed without hesitation his fortune, his health, and even his natural indolence, to the gaming-table, the banquet, and other still more questionable vices.[1]

Nicholas Fouquet, whose name became famous owing to his extraordinary reverse of fortune, was a man whose genius was essentially diplomatic. Full of resources, of which he never hesitated to avail himself to the utmost, he frequently discovered a mean of successful enterprise in the very circumstances which to others appeared pregnant only with danger, and hopeless from their entanglement. Learned in the law, well read in polite literature, and an amateur of art; brilliant in conversation, high-bred in his deportment, and magnificent in all his ideas, he no sooner conferred a service than he at once placed the person whom he had obliged in the position of a friend, and confided in his reciprocal esteem without one misgiving that it would fail. He possessed, pre-eminently, moreover, the rare and difficult talent of listening, not only with patience, but with apparent interest, to the most dull and vapid communications; and always replying at the right moment, and in the most agreeable manner; by which means he generally con-

[1] Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de Louis XIV. *Choisy.*

trived to dismiss those to whom he had given audience more than half satisfied, though they had not succeeded in inducing him to admit their claims. A finished voluptuary, he never suffered the duties of his ministry to interfere with the pleasures to which he was addicted; but affecting to retire to his villa at St. Maude, in order that he might work without interruption, he was accustomed to leave a crowd of courtiers in his antechamber, loud in their admiration of the indefatigable labour to which so great a man devoted himself without comment or reluctance; and to descend by a secret stair to a small garden, where he abandoned himself to the most degrading dissipation, in the society of some of the most beautiful and high-born women of Paris; who, seduced by his gold, and careless of their own honour, became the shameless partners of his disgraceful orgies.

Liberal to an excess towards literary men, whom he was able to appreciate and anxious to reward, he became the friend of Racine, la Fontaine, and Molière; the Mæcenas of le Brun[1] and le Notre; and he pleased himself with the belief that he should be enabled to govern the young king, by directing at the same time his official labours and his private pleasures. He deceived himself, however; for as we have already shown, Louis XIV. had resolved henceforward to act by, and of himself.

[1] Charles Le Brun, an historical painter, and one of the heads of the French School of Art, was born in Paris in 1619. He was laden with honours and generosity by Louis XIV. His most famous works are the *Battles of Alexander*, the *Penitent Magdalen*, the *Martyrdom of St. Stephen*, &c. He also executed a great number of frescos in the château of Fouquet. He died in 1690.

Such were the three individuals, to whom, two hours after the death of Mazarin, the king announced his intention to become his own prime minister; and while le Tellier and Lionne merely bowed somewhat incredulously, a smile played upon the lip of Fouquet. He held the key of the public chest; and accustomed as he was to guide all around him with a golden rein, he never doubted that in his case, at least, the royal purpose must soon be rescinded.[1] Hitherto, whenever Louis had applied to him for a supply, he had contented himself by replying: "Sire, the treasury of Your Majesty is empty; but His Eminence will, no doubt, advance you a loan." Now, however, no farther appeal could be made to the equivocal liberality of the cardinal; and Fouquet felt that he was himself all-powerful upon the question of finance; while the profuse expenditure, and uncalculating magnificence of the pomp-loving young sovereign, left him little doubt that his assistance would soon become imperative.

Accident, that providence of princes, had, however, ordained otherwise. After a brief conference with his ministers, Louis had forthwith proceeded to the Louvre; when on entering his cabinet the first person whom he encountered was Colbert, who had been awaiting him for the last two hours, and who requested a private audience upon the instant. Startled by the urgency of his manner, the king at once retired with him into the deep recess of the window, beyond the hearing of the courtiers; where Colbert informed him that he came to indicate to His Majesty the different places in

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

which Mazarin had concealed or buried nearly fifteen millions of ready money, of which no mention had been made in his will; and which he (Colbert) consequently imagined had been intended by the cardinal to replenish the treasury of His Majesty, which was at that time utterly exhausted. The young sovereign listened with astonishment, and demanded to know if he were certain of the extraordinary fact that he advanced; to which Colbert replied by furnishing him with proofs of his assertion.

No circumstance could have occurred at that particular moment so welcome to Louis XIV. as the discovery of this hidden treasure, which at once, and for a long period, rendered him independent of the superintendent of finance; nor was the revelation less important to the fortunes of Colbert himself.

Immediate measures were concerted for the recovery of the various sums designated by the zealous and fortunate young secretary; and with almost universal success. At Sedan five millions were found; two at Brisac; six at La Fère; and between five and six at Vincennes. A considerable sum had also been secreted in the Louvre, but although the spot where it had been deposited was found, the money had disappeared; and it was then remembered that Bernouin, the confidential attendant of the cardinal, had left the palace on the previous evening for more than two hours before the death of his master; and it at once became apparent how the interval had been employed.

Despite this subtraction, however, Louis XIV. at once found himself one of the richest monarchs of Christendom, for his private funds amounted to no less than from eighteen to twenty millions; of which the value

was greatly enhanced by the fact that no one, not even Fouquet himself, was aware of the extent of his resources.

His first and most anxious care was to regulate the etiquette of his court, which had been necessarily invaded during the extreme and sudden changes to which his reign had hitherto been subjected: for even at this early period, Louis XIV. began to manifest that respect for his own individuality, which he was not long in exacting from all by whom he was surrounded. He was then in his twenty-third year; and although the cardinal had, as a matter of personal policy, caused his education to be so neglected as to expose him to the frequent mortification of feeling his incapacity to enforce opinions of whose validity he was himself convinced, but which he could not put forth with the propriety exacted from him by a sense of his own dignity; he was, nevertheless, in society, the model of an accomplished gentleman. Of middling height, but admirably proportioned, he increased his stature by the adoption of high-heeled shoes, which raised him some inches. His hair was magnificent, and he wore it in masses upon his shoulders, after the fashion of earlier times; his nose was large and well-formed; his mouth agreeable in its expression; his eyes of a deep blue; and his mode of utterance slow and strongly accentuated, lending to all he said a gravity incompatible with his years, but which produced an effect admirably in accordance with the impression that he studied to produce.

No contrast could be greater than that which existed between the royal brothers, both physically and morally. Philip of France was a prince of gentle, or rather of effeminate manners; of ardent, but merely impulsive

courage; and a perfect type of the luxurious and chivalric nobility by whom the last of the Valois had been surrounded, and who had served to distinguish his reign alike by their vices and their daring; while with these qualities, it will be readily understood that Philip had long supported with undisguised disgust, the superiority assumed by a brother who sought to crush, by his overweening arrogance, all those who were subservient to him. The whole boyhood of the two princes had consequently been one perpetual struggle; but for the last few years the younger had ceased to contend beneath the iron hand which had ascertained the extent of its own strength.

Before the death of the cardinal, *Monsieur* had solicited the queen-mother to obtain the consent of the king to his marriage with the Princess Henrietta of England; and Anne of Austria, who was tenderly attached to the young princess, readily undertook the mission. Its accomplishment, however, proved to be a matter of more serious difficulty than she had anticipated, for Louis had never overcome his boyish prejudice against the daughter of Charles I; and excused himself by alleging that an alliance with the English would be displeasing to the French people; nor was Mazarin less repugnant to the marriage, for he had still to resent the refusal of Charles II. to receive the hand of his niece; forgetting that the monarch was never likely, on his side, to forget that his alliance had been coldly declined when he was in misfortune. Nevertheless, the arguments of the queen at length prevailed over the distaste of her son; and it was agreed between Anne of Austria and Henrietta-Maria that the marriage of their children should take place immediately after the return of the latter from England; whither she was about to proceed with her daughter, in order to enjoy

the happiness of seeing Charles II. at length peaceably in possession of the throne of his ancestors.

A short time subsequently to the arrangement she accordingly took leave of the court, to the great mortification of *Monsieur*, who was vehement in his entreaties that she would shorten her visit for his sake; and on arriving in London she found the Duke of Buckingham, the son of him to whom Anne of Austria was indebted for the most romantic episode of her life, enamoured of her widowed daughter, the princess-royal; but as, like his father, he professed but little constancy in his attachments, he had no sooner been presented to the Princess Henrietta than he became madly in love with this new divinity.

To the young and amiable princess the transition from an existence of constraint, monotony, and privation, to the glitter and gallantry of a court like that of Charles II, was perfect enchantment; and she began, for the first time, to experience a happy consciousness of her own individual importance; which was enhanced by the constant receipt of letters from *Monsieur* to the queen, urging her early return to Paris, and the accomplishment of her promise.

The prince was, indeed, most anxious to terminate the marriage, not from any overweening attachment to his promised bride, for he was incapable of violent passion, but because he regarded it as an event which, by creating for him an independent position, must in some degree emancipate him from the authority of his brother; while Henrietta-Maria was the more inclined to comply with his entreaties from the desire which she felt to conduce to the comfort and consolation of Anne of Austria;

who, after having seen herself all-powerful during the regency, had lived to witness the gradual decline of her influence, and to feel herself a mere cipher in the brilliant court which had once bowed down before her.

At the death of Mazarin she had made an effort to recover her lost authority; but Louis XIV. had no sooner detected the latent intention, than he gave her to understand, what he had already declared to his ministers, that he would brook no rival near his throne; and moreover, that this was no sudden resolution, fated to be rescinded as lightly as it had been made; but a firm determination, long formed, and which would admit of neither expostulation nor argument.

The queen-mother bowed beneath this last disappointment with a patient dignity which astonished all those who were conversant with the inherent haughtiness and impetuosity of her character; and began to prepare at her favourite Val-de-Grâce a retreat, in which the culture of flowers became her principal amusement. Few were yet aware that the fearful malady to which she ultimately fell a victim, was already making fearful inroads on her constitution, and exposing her to concealed but terrible suffering. Under these circumstances, therefore, the English queen decided upon leaving London without further delay, despite the inclemency of the season; and the Duke of Buckingham, at his earnest entreaty, received permission from Charles II. to escort herself and the Princess Henrietta to Paris.

During the voyage, the vessel in which they were embarked struck upon the sands, and was for a time in imminent danger of going to pieces; and it was during that awful interval that the duke, utterly careless

of himself, but maddened by the idea of the peril to which the Princess Henrietta was exposed, put so little constraint upon his passion that it soon ceased to be a secret to those about him. At length the vessel was, with considerable difficulty, rescued from its perilous position, but so much damaged that it was found necessary to put in to the nearest port; where it had no sooner arrived than the princess was attacked by measles. At this new calamity the duke became outrageous in his despair; and committed such excesses that the royal party had no sooner anchored at Havre, where they were to remain a few days in order that the invalid might recruit her strength, than the queen insisted that Buckingham should immediately set out for Paris to announce their arrival. Resistance was of course impossible; and on the evening of the same day the duke proceeded on his mission.

Within a week he was followed by the royal travellers, who were met by *Monsieur* at a considerable distance from the capital, with all the eagerness of a lover; although, as we have seen, his demonstrations were in reality due to an influence less flattering to the princess than that of her own charms. In his suite was the Count de Guiche, who had become his most intimate friend and favourite, and who was one of the most elegant nobles of the court; and had, moreover, secured in the heart of Henrietta a feeling of gratitude for his gallant championship during the most cruel trial of her girlhood.

Buckingham's first folly in the capital was to parade his jealousy of the Count de Guiche; and he did this with so little discretion that *Monsieur* was soon informed of the circumstance, and made a formal complaint to the two

queens; who affected to laugh at his uneasiness; the Queen of England strong in the virtue of her daughter, and Anne of Austria in the belief that the power which she had possessed over the father would prove equally influential over the son.

Philip was, nevertheless, not to be appeased so easily; a rumour of the headlong passion with which the Princess Henrietta had inspired Buckingham had long been rife in Paris; and she who had, during so many years, been totally overlooked, and utterly unappreciated, suddenly became the object of universal curiosity and interest. The jealousy of *Monsieur*, which was easily aroused, would have required no further stimulus than this one fact, even without the presence of the original culprit; but this annoyance superadded to the other, was too much for his powers of endurance; and he consequently exacted that, after a brief sojourn at the French court, sufficient to enable him to fulfil the necessary formalities of his mission, the duke should be invited to return to England.

Meanwhile the preparations for the marriage were in active progress; and the king presented to his brother, as a wedding present, the appanage of the late Duke d'Orleans, with the exception of Blois and Chambord; while the arrival of the English princess, to the great delight of the court, put an abrupt conclusion to the mourning for the cardinal, which gave place to the fashions that she introduced.

From an interesting child, Henrietta, embellished by happiness and by a consciousness of her exalted rank, had suddenly been transformed into a lovely and dignified woman. Tall and graceful, with a complexion of the most exquisite beauty, and possessed of a refined taste

which taught her to profit by her personal and acquired advantages, she saw herself at once the principal ornament of the most supercilious court in Europe, and the model upon which all the great ladies of the royal circle strove to fashion both their dress and their deportment. The revolution was a startling one; nor was the king himself exempted from its influence.

The austerities of Lent not permitting the celebration of any great public festivities, it was decided that the marriage of *Monsieur* should take place privately at the Palais-royal, in the presence only of the royal family, and the persons of their immediate retinue. On the 31st of March it was consequently performed by the bishop of Valence; having for its principal witnesses the king and queen, the queen-mother, the Queen of England, the daughters of the late Duke d'Orleans, the Prince de Condé, and the Duke of Buckingham; and a few days subsequently the latter left the court of France, in a state of mind bordering upon distraction.

At this period the king commenced the system of regularity upon which he had already decided; and which became ere long the undeviating etiquette of the court. He rose at eight o'clock, performed his devotions, dressed himself, and then read for an hour, at the close of which time he partook of a light breakfast; left his chamber at ten, attended the council, and at mid-day heard mass; during the interval which remained until the dinner hour, he appeared in public, or went to the apartments of the two queens; and after the repast he generally remained a considerable time with the royal family. He then closeted himself with his ministers, either collectively, or separately; gave audiences,

during which he exhibited great urbanity and patience; and received petitions, to which he replied on days previously reserved for that purpose. The rest of the afternoon he passed in conversation with the queen and the queen-mother, or in the little court of the Countess de Soissons; at the card-table, but never for a heavy stake, or at a mere game of chance; in driving, or at the theatre, according to the season; and this routine was never interrupted save during the hunting season, or on the occasion of some extraordinary festivity. Finally, at supper, which was his favourite repast, he collected about him all the princesses and their ladies of honour; and terminated the evening by ballets or assemblies.

At the end of April the court removed to Fontainebleau, where they were followed by the Prince de Condé and the Duke de Beaufort, who had become two of the most assiduous and popular members of the royal circle; and a month had been spent in perpetual fêtes, when the harmony which had hitherto subsisted between all the members of the illustrious family, was suddenly interrupted by the awakened jealousy of the young queen; who one day threw herself at the feet of Anne of Austria, bathed in tears and trembling with emotion, and confided to her, in the anguish of her heart, that the king had fallen in love with *Madame*.

The queen-mother was more grieved than surprised by this communication; for *Monsieur*, jealous on his side, had already complained of the same fact; and Anne of Austria had found herself unable, from internal conviction, to advance arguments sufficiently powerful to remove the impression from his mind.

There was, indeed, too much reason for the uneasiness

of both parties; for the king who, during her infancy, had not only felt, but unhesitatingly expressed, his contempt for the English princess; and who, when for a moment her marriage with himself had been mooted by the cardinal, had declared that she was too thin, that she did not please him, and that it was impossible for him ever to love her; had discovered, from the moment in which she became the wife of his brother, that all their tastes and feelings assimilated; and had attached himself to her society with a tenacity that excited universal remark.

Nor was the princess, on her side, altogether blameless. The depreciating remarks of the king had been repeated to her during her girlhood, and had not only produced a dangerous influence over her mind, but become, unconsciously to herself, the motive of her actions. Had any one ventured to tell her that in accepting the hand of *Monsieur*, when she might have commanded that of one of the reigning sovereigns of Europe, she was impelled by the hope of forcing Louis to recant his opinions, and to confess the power of the attractions which he had previously affected to despise, she would have been indignant at the accusation; while such was nevertheless the impulse under which she acted.

For this unacknowledged purpose—unacknowledged doubtlessly even to her own heart—she had studied to become a proficient in all the graces which adorn a court; in all the endearing qualities which are the best charm of woman, whatever may be her worldly rank; and in those intellectual qualities which could elevate her character, and render her superior to the mere butterflies by whom she was surrounded; and she had

succeeded only too well in her attempt. Such combined attractions, both of person and mind, could not fail in their effect upon so susceptible a nature as that of Louis XIV; and an intimacy ensued which, although perfectly warranted by the closeness of their family connexion, was not without considerable danger to both parties.

There was a bitter exultation mingled with the triumph of the princess, which can be appreciated only by those who, like herself, have been subjected to intense humiliation, and at last experience the power of revenging it upon its author. Henrietta did not believe for an instant that she could love the king; but she nevertheless rejoiced in the conviction that she could sway at will the feelings of the haughty sovereign before whose insults she had formerly quailed; and she consequently left no effort untried to render her circle the centre of pleasure and attraction; the favourite amusements of Louis were those of most frequent recurrence in her apartments; the friends whom she selected were precisely those the best calculated to interest and occupy him. In short, ever bearing in remembrance that he had once ventured to underrate her merits, and to reject her hand, she experienced a cruel satisfaction in perceiving that she had established her power over the heart of the king.[1]

As Louis held his court sometimes in her apartments, and sometimes in those of the Countess de Soissons, a close friendship was soon formed between them; but the young queen resolutely refused to become a sharer

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Motteville.

in their amusements. Sincerely attached to Anne of Austria, whom she rarely quitted; rigid in her devotional duties, and more retiring in her habits than was consistent with her rank, she could ill brook the partial desertion to which the difference in their habits condemned her; and she began to suspect a truth which was well calculated to embitter her existence.

Despite the beauty of Maria Theresa, upon which Louis XIV. had congratulated himself at their first interview, he had never for an instant loved her. His heart was yet unweaned from a first and serious attachment; and no stranger could replace its object. He treated her indeed with the greatest consideration, both as a Princess of Spain and as the Queen of France; but so cold a feeling could not satisfy a young and enthusiastic nature. Moreover, Maria Theresa was unfortunate enough to love her husband with all the ardour of her country; and she found herself estranged from his society, and compelled to seek her only amusement in speaking the language, and in dwelling upon the memories of her lost home, with the queen-mother. As a sense of her moral isolation grew upon her, she shrank more and more resolutely from the overpowering gaieties of the court; and sought to escape the harrowing spectacle of the gallantries bestowed by Louis upon the bevy of beauties by whom he was estranged from her society; thus unconsciously widening the gulph between them, and rendering the very estrangement over which she wept in secret the more habitual and hopeless.

And while the young queen thus mourned with bitter tears the loss of an illusion which had rendered the period of her marriage one proud and triumphant dream,

each day appeared to strengthen the attachment between the fickle monarch and his brother's wife, although no word of passion had polluted the lips of either. Neither the remonstrances of the queen-mother, the prospect of the early birth of a dauphin, nor the arduous labours of the state to which he had condemned himself, diverted the attention of Louis XIV. from his devotion to *Madame;* and the magnificent fêtes which he instituted in her honour, were a source of such enormous outlay, that Fouquet was lost in astonishment as to whence the sovereign could derive the means of sustaining so profuse and uncalculating an expenditure; and awaited with some anxiety the exhaustion of his resources, in order that he might at last attain the coveted ascendancy over his mind through the medium of his necessities.

It was probably with a view to remove the too legitimate suspicions of the queen, by diverting them into another channel, that Louis about this time affected a violent inclination for Mademoiselle de la Motte Houdancourt, one of her maids of honour. These ladies were under the guardianship of the Duchess de Navailles,[1] who owed her place at court to the cardinal. Some privileges contested between herself and the super-

[1] Wife of Philip de Montault, Duke de Navailles, and de la Valette, peer and marshal of France; originally of Bigorre, where his family traced their descent from the 14th century. Born in 1621, he entered the household of the Cardinal de Richelieu as a page in 1635, abjured the Protestant religion, and attained to the highest military grades. He commanded the right wing of the cavalry at the battle of Senef in 1674; and in the following year, received the bâton of Marshal of France. He afterwards obtained the ribbon of the order of the Holy Ghost, and the post of governor of the Duke d'Orleans. He died in 1684, without male issue.

intendent, excited the indignation of Madame de Soissons, who in common with her sisters had shown the greatest indifference on the death of the cardinal; but who, nevertheless, taunted the duchess by the remark, that in opposing the niece she was guilty of ingratitude towards the uncle; to which Madame de Navailles replied with calm dignity, that could His Eminence return to earth he would be more satisfied of her gratitude than of that of the Countess de Soissons.[1]

The position of the high-principled and scrupulous Duchess de Navailles was already sufficiently arduous before she raised up so powerful an enemy as the heartless and vindictive countess, who never forgave the stinging rejoinder which we have just quoted; for a spirit of gallantry had become diffused over the royal antechamber, which rendered her office by no means a sinecure. Nevertheless, Madame de Navailles continued to struggle against, not only the intrigues of the young nobles who enjoyed her perplexity, but also the folly of the giddy maids of honour themselves, who were but too willing to second their enterprise; for she felt that the dignity of her royal mistress was compromised by the levity of her charge; and she resolved at any sacrifice to enforce regularity and order.

Madame de Soissons had consequently a double motive for encouraging the coquetries of Mademoiselle Houdancourt; as, by so doing, she screened *Madame* on the one hand, and exasperated the Duchess de Navailles on the other; and the pupil whom she had selected proved so apt, that ere long Madame de Navailles had reason to

[1] Souvenirs de Madame de Caylus.

apprehend that Louis contemplated an invasion of her apartments. The rumour had no sooner reached her, therefore, than she hastened to request a private audience of the king, with whom she expostulated both as a Christian, and as a husband about to bring disgrace beneath the roof of a young and virtuous wife; and for a time he supported her harangue with so much urbanity that she began to hope she had convinced him of his error. She was, however, premature in her judgment. The imperious nature of Louis XIV, which loathed even the semblance of opposition; and his extreme selfishness, which led him to disregard every consideration that clashed with his own self-indulgence, soon prompted him to hint to the zealous duchess that she was incurring a great risk of exciting his displeasure; to which she respectfully, but unhesitatingly replied, that she had already reflected upon the probability that such would be the case; and was aware of all the misfortunes which the loss of his royal favour must inevitably entail upon her; being conscious that it was to His Majesty both her husband and herself owed alike their fortune and their position; he the lieutenancy of the light horse, and she her situation as lady of honour, of both which His Majesty could in a moment deprive them; but that this fact, urgent as it was, could not alter her resolution to fulfil her duties conscientiously; and then, throwing herself at his feet, she implored him to respect the household of the queen, and to remember that he was himself its master.

The king dismissed her angrily; but on the morrow, chancing to find her in the circle of the queen-mother, he advanced and greeted her with a smile and an extended hand; and Madame de Navailles flattered herself that

peace had thus tacitly been signed between them.[1] If, however, Louis were really sincere at the moment, this better feeling did not long endure; for having detailed the scene to Madame de Soissons, she sarcastically congratulated him upon his patience; and the vanity of the king at once led him to pursue an adventure from which his better sense would have dissuaded him; and by thus making himself the tool of an ambitious woman, who was only anxious to mortify a rival, he subjected himself to a mortification unworthy of his exalted rank, and of the example which it enforced him to offer to the giddy courtiers about him.

On the other hand, the conscientious lady of honour, feeling, as she had frankly confessed to the king, that the prosperity of her family depended upon his favour; and anxious not to ruin her husband, save on valid and sufficient grounds, consulted her confessor, explaining the difficulty in which she found herself, and her determination to abide by his decision. It was soon given; for he at once declared that as a Christian she was called upon to sacrifice all worldly advantages, rather than fail in her duty by an unworthy concession. The alternative was, nevertheless, a bitter one; and it was not without a great struggle that Madame de Navailles saw herself compelled to disregard all worldly considerations in order to prove herself worthy of the confidence which was reposed in her; and the rather as her resistance against aggression involved not only herself but her husband, whose position was also one of trust and dignity; but she never wavered; and, finding her best consolation in the con-

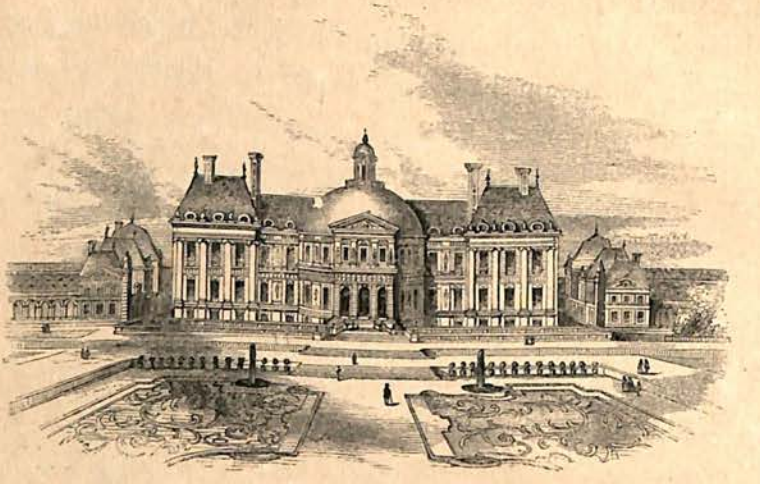
[1] Mémoires de Madame de Motteville.

viction that she could only suffer in a good cause, she remained firm in her resolution; and, being given to understand that she must place no faith in the apparent repentance of the king, she immediately caused iron gratings to be placed outside the windows of the apartments of the maids of honour.

This extreme step did not, however, entail all the consequences which she had apprehended; for Louis contented himself by dismissing her from her guardianship of the very troublesome office to which she had been appointed, and conferring it upon the superintendent; who would, as he had good reason to know, prove less unaccommodating. This result, which formed a subject of conversation for all the court, sufficed to terminate a fancy which had never, upon the part of Louis, been a serious one; for even at the period when it commenced, his attention had already been attracted by Mademoiselle de la Vallière; that la Vallière whose name was destined to become famous throughout Europe, and whose gentleness and devotion almost excused the errors which have thrown a veil of reproach over her name.

There never was, in all probability, an autobiography written, either by man or woman, which bore so thoroughly the stamp of truth and feeling as that of Mademoiselle de la Vallière; and there is no attempt from the first page to the last to palliate her fault, of which no one was a more severe critic than herself. Never for a moment deceived as to the extent of her error, it embittered even the most brilliant moments of her existence; and nothing save the intense affection which she lavished upon the king — not as a sovereign, but as a man—not as the monarch of France, but as the one and only individual who ever

touched her heart—could have induced her so long to disregard the reproaches of a conscience, which neither pomp nor passion had ever power to silence for an hour.



CHAPTER XIV.

GIRLHOOD OF LA VALLIÈRE—HER ADVENT AT COURT—THE COURT-BALLET—LOUIS XIV. IN A GREEK TUNIC—THE CONFIDENCE IN THE FOREST—SUAVITY OF THE KING—JEALOUSY OF THE COUNT DE GUICHE—THE STORM IN THE PARK—THE DOUBLE-SECRETARY—THE LOTTERY OF THE QUEEN-MOTHER—THE BRACELETS—RIVALRY OF FOUQUET—THE TWENTY THOUSAND PISTOLES—INDIGNATION OF LA VALLIÈRE—CABAL AGAINST FOUQUET—HIS TERGIVERSATIONS—LOUIS XIV. RESOLVES ON HIS ARREST—THE FÊTE AT VAUX—THE JOURNEY TO NANTES—ARREST OF FOUQUET—HIS PRIVATE PAPERS—LETTER OF MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ—ANNE OF AUSTRIA AND LA VALLIÈRE SAVE THE LIFE OF FOUQUET.

Louise-Françoise de la Baume de Blanc, the daughter of the Marquis de la Vallière, was born at Tours, in the year 1644. She lost her father almost in her infancy; and her mother, who was the daughter of the Seigneur de la Coutellaie, equerry of the king's state stable, was left with a proud name and an inadequate income; which induced her to form a second marriage with M. de St. Rémy, who held the situation of comptroller of the household of Gaston, Duke d'Orleans. At the court of that prince, Louise passed the early years of her girlhood; while her only brother, the Marquis de la Vallière,

whom she seldom saw, spent the principal portion of his time at Tours. As she advanced to girlhood, the position of her step-father procured for her free ingress to the monotonous little court of *Madame*, who welcomed her with kindness; and where, without becoming officially one of her maids of honour, she was invested with all the privileges of the office, and passed most of her time. The circle of a prince, banished virtually, if not ostensibly, from the capital, offered no very great attractions to persons of her age; but to Louise the companionship of other young girls rendered the palace of Blois a paradise; for she guessed not how soon the serpent of passion was to glide among the roses of her peaceful Eden.

We have already recorded the brief visit paid to Blois by Louis XIV. when on his way to the frontier to claim the hand of the Infanta; a visit apparently so unimportant, and yet so fraught with consequence to at least two individuals, that it could not be passed over in silence. During the few hours of its continuance, Mademoiselle d'Orleans lost the last glimpse of the hope to which she had so fondly clung of seeing herself one day upon the throne of France; while Louise de la Vallière learnt that the idolized and powerful sovereign of whom she had always thought with awe almost amounting to alarm, had, on his departure from Blois, awakened her to the existence of a new world of feeling, in which she found herself alone, hopeless, and bewildered. Now, for the first time, she began to understand the conversations which were daily taking place in the anteroom among her weary and discontented companions, who were constantly bewailing their exile from the courtly festivities of Paris. Now she began to comprehend that life might indeed present

objects of greater interest than her birds, her flowers, or her sports; but the conviction was confused; she never entertained an idea that she loved the king; she merely pictured to herself the happiness which must arise from seeing him, listening to his voice, and existing in his presence; and her own misery in being exiled, as she believed for ever, from such a privilege.

And meanwhile Louis was on his way to Fontarabia, criticising the old-fashioned little court of Blois, and unconscious of the very existence of the fair and bashful girl whose whole being was absorbed in the memory of his transitory visit.

The illness and subsequent death of *Monsieur* supervened; and while she wept over the loss of her protector, Louise de la Vallière little suspected the effect which it would produce on her own fortunes. The result to her family was, indeed, sufficiently serious to absorb her attention, even at that early age; for by this event M. de St. Rémy was deprived of his office, and his pecuniary resources were painfully affected. On the dispersion of the regal establishment some months subsequently, Louise, with an overburthened heart, walked to the palace to take leave of Mademoiselle de Montalais, her favourite friend, who had been appointed to a place in the household of the Princess Henrietta, then betrothed to the king's brother; and the departure of this lady was so bitter a trial that she was faint with weeping when she arrived at the château, and found herself in the presence of Madame de Choisy. Her grief was so evident and so sincere, that the wife of the chancellor was touched by her emotion, and inquired if she would like to share the fortunes of her old companion, by entering the household of the princess.

Louise smiled amid her tears. "In that case," said Madame de Choisy, "wipe your eyes; for all the arrangements are not yet made, and there will be room for you."

The promise was fulfilled. At the termination of a fortnight the appointment arrived; and a week was allowed to the young maid of honour for the necessary preparations. Within that week the marriage of *Madame* took place; but Mademoiselle de la Vallière only entered upon her duties previous to the departure of the court for Fontainebleau, where she was suddenly launched into a world of dissipation, splendour, and intrigue. She was soon remarked by the Count de Guiche; but although she received his attentions with gratitude, she repulsed his gallantries, and avoided his society.

At this period she had just attained her seventeenth year; and even while eclipsed in beauty by many of those about her, the charm of her unaffected modesty, the retiring timidity of her manner, the extreme purity of her complexion, her large and languishing blue eyes, and the profusion of flaxen hair which shaded her brow and bosom, gave a singular loveliness to her appearance, of which she alone was unconscious. Her figure, which was not yet formed, and a slight lameness, occasioned by a fall during her girlhood, were the only defects which even her enemies could discern in her appearance; save, perhaps, a slight trace of small-pox, which had in some degree impaired the smoothness of her skin; and, meanwhile, her peculiarly unobtrusive habits exempted her on all sides from either jealousy or suspicion.

Among the festivities at Fontainebleau a ballet took place, in which both the king and *Madame* bore an active part; Louis XIV. figured on the occasion as Ceres; and

the *Grand Monarque*, who resented the most trifling want of respect from those around him, made his appearance in a Greek tunic, and a coronet of golden wheat-ears; declaimed his own praises in the rhymes of Benserade; and, finally, figured in this unregal costume before the eyes of the whole court.[1] At the termination of the ballet, the company dispersed themselves about the park, where they found in every direction tables sumptuously provided, of which the honours were done by nymphs and forest deities, crowned with ivy; but all these magnificent arrangements were almost unheeded by Mademoiselle de la Vallière, who was absorbed by the image of the king-goddess whom she had so lately seen exhibiting the graces of his person amid applauding crowds; and she at length felt the gaiety by which she was surrounded so oppressive, that she suggested to Mesdemoiselles de Chalais, de Tonnay-Charente,[2] and de Montalais, that they should walk into the forest, and repose themselves for a time in one of its dim recesses.

To this proposal they willingly consented; and after strolling for awhile, listening to the nightingales, and watching the stars which from time to time peeped through the foliage as it swayed beneath the voluptuous breeze of evening, they finally seated themselves under a large tree upon the border of the wood, and began to discuss anew the pleasures of the day, and the chief actors in the gay scene which had formed their principal feature. For a time Louise bore no share in the conversation; but she was at length startled from her silence

[1] "The ballet of *The Seasons* was danced by his majesty at Fontainebleau on the 23d of July."—*Gazette de* 1661.

[2] Afterwards Madame de Montespan.

by an appeal to her judgment, when she unguardedly declared that she could give no opinion upon the subject discussed, and was only surprised that any man should be remarked beside the king.

This reply drew down upon her, as a natural consequence, the sarcasm of the whole party, who accused her of being so difficult that nothing save a crowned head would satisfy her vanity; when the poor girl, anxious to exculpate herself from a charge which she felt must overwhelm her with ridicule should it become the gossip of the court, hastily exclaimed that they did her injustice; for that his crown could add nothing to his natural advantages; but was, on the contrary, the safeguard of those about him, as without it he would indeed be doubly dangerous.

She had no sooner made this unwise rejoinder than she became aware of the extent of her imprudence; and while her three companions remained silent in astonishment, she sprang from the ground to escape; and discovered that two men were partially concealed behind the tree against which she had been leaning. A faint shriek instantly directed the attention of the whole party to the fact; and terrified beyond control, they simultaneously fled in the direction of the château, where they arrived, panting and breathless.

Once alone in her apartment, whither she immediately hastened, Louise de la Vallière wept bitterly over the folly of which she had been guilty. It was the first time that she had ventured to express her feelings, and the long pent-up secret had escaped her she knew not how; although she was painfully conscious of the ridicule with which it was calculated to overwhelm her. In the agony of her repentance she flung herself upon

her knees, and earnestly prayed that the consequences of her fault might be averted; but her emotion and alarm were, nevertheless, so great, that for a couple of days she was unable to perform her duties, or even to leave her room. Now, for the first time, she felt in their full force the difficulties of the position which she had coveted; and she trembled as she looked forward to again appearing before the malicious eyes of the court. There was, however, no alternative; and she was at length compelled to make the trial.

Montalais was, as she well knew, the greatest gossip-monger in the whole city; while Mademoiselle de Tonnay-Charente, who piqued herself upon her wit, was not likely to suffer so favourable an opportunity for its display to remain unimproved; and thus, beset on all sides, and only too well aware of her own want of self-possession, the poor girl stole from her chamber on the evening of the third day, to take her place in the saloon of *Madame*. She traversed the anteroom without exciting either word or look which implied the betrayal of her secret; and for a moment she began to entertain the hope that she had wronged her companions, and that her folly was undivulged; but a remark from the Duke de Roquelaure, who chanced to be in the circle of *Madame* when she entered, soon undeceived her; and the shock was so great that she staggered, and would have fallen, had not Mademoiselle de Tonnay-Charente promptly come to her assistance, attributing her sudden faintness to fatigue; a plea of which she readily availed herself to request her dismission for the evening.

When she found herself again alone, the unhappy girl more than ever saw the necessity of struggling against a

weakness which could only tend to increase the difficulty of her position; and, at whatever cost, to combat the terror and shame by which she was oppressed. Having formed this resolution, she entered the apartments of *Madame* on the following day with an apparent composure which belied her real feelings.

As she had anticipated, the king was already there; and engaged in conversation with the different ladies of the suite; carefully addressing a few words to each as he passed down the room. He was yet at some distance from the door near which she sat; and thus she saw him slowly approach, and began to comprehend that she should probably be spoken to in her turn; an honour which had never yet occurred to her, and which caused her heart to beat with mingled joy and apprehension. At length, as she had anticipated, he paused before her, and inquired what she had thought of the ballet of the previous Saturday, if indeed she still remembered it?

With some difficulty she compelled herself to answer; but her agitation was increased by remarking that the king started as he heard her voice; and looked at her with a marked attention, which drew upon them the observation of all by whom they were immediately surrounded. After remaining a few seconds with his eyes steadily fixed upon her, Louis, with a profound bow to the blushing and bewildered girl, prepared to leave the room; but before he did so, he again turned more than once towards the spot where she was sitting.

Thenceforward Mademoiselle de la Vallière found herself the marked object of the attentions of the king; and fortunately for her composure, she continued unaware that His Majesty had been one of the eaves-droppers of the

wood of Fontainebleau, induced to this somewhat treacherous indiscretion by the suggestion of M. de Beringhen; who, seeing the four fair girls retire from the brilliant scene around them to hold a conference in the forest, had laughingly remarked, that they were about to confide to each other the secrets of their hearts; and that the opportunity was a favourable one for ascertaining the identity of their favourite cavaliers. The king had entered willingly into the jest; but as it was too dark to permit either himself or his companion to discover who were the fugitives, they were compelled to trust to their after-penetration to divine this important point; and thus it was that Louis XIV, jealous above all things of being loved for his own sake, had the gratification of discovering that one heart at least acknowledged the power of his attractions, not as a monarch, but as a man. The sequel of the incident we have already shown; and when he recognised the voice of Mademoiselle de la Vallière, it was scarcely wonderful that he should examine with attention the person of whose attachment he had obtained such unequivocal testimony.

The delight of Louise was consequently great, when she perceived that the king looked upon her with an eye of favour; while his manner was at the same time so guarded, and so respectful, and he so carefully abstained from any allusion which could lead her to look beyond the present moment, or to imagine that his courtesy was intended to imply more than a mere generous interest, that she soon found herself enabled to converse with him with easy and graceful composure; and thus to exhibit all the charm of a young pure heart still uncontaminated by its commerce with a court.

Every evening, when he joined the circle of *Madame*, after having paid his respects to the princess and the principal ladies of her circle, he contrived to secure a brief conversation with Mademoiselle de la Vallière; and as the passion of Louis for *Madame Henriette* was at least suspected, it became a matter of general belief that it was for her sake alone he made his visits so long and so continuous; a faith which Louise entertained in common with those about her, and which blinded her to the peril to which she was exposed.

One individual alone was not, however, to be so deceived; and that one was the Count de Guiche, who, as we have already stated, had been attracted by the modest graces of la Vallière from her first appearance at Fontainebleau; and conscious that should this new caprice of the king gain strength by time, he could no longer entertain the hope of succeeding in his own suit, he resolved at least to ascertain its effect upon the mind of Louise herself; for which purpose he paid a visit to her apartments, where he exhibited a jealousy which terrified the poor girl into a remonstrance upon the unreasonableness of his reproaches, unmerited on her part, as she had never felt or affected towards him a warmer feeling than that of respectful esteem. Nevertheless the count was not to be appeased; and conscious of the weakness of his cause, he overwhelmed her with the most stinging sarcasms; and finally withdrew, declaring that although she had despised his passion, he doubted not but it would prove acceptable elsewhere.

This outbreak of offended vanity in a man whom she had avoided, was a sincere annoyance to Mademoiselle de la Vallière; who had the greatest reason to apprehend the

effects of his enmity from the fact that he had latterly attached himself exclusively to *Madame;* while there could not exist a doubt but the same circumstance which had excited the annoyance of M. de Guiche, must have awakened the indignation of the princess; and that the sudden alliance which had been formed between them owed its existence to their mutual mortification. Be this as it may, however, it is certain that the intimacy thus commenced, ultimately led to the unfortunate attachment which endured throughout their lives.

Only a few days subsequent to the visit of the Count de Guiche a great hunt took place, at which all the ladies of the court were present; and at the termination of the sport, tables were spread under the trees in the park, at a considerable distance from the château, about which the whole party assembled. The repast was a gay one, but the heat excessive; while the clouds which were gathering above their heads foretold a storm. Nevertheless, heedless of the warning, the feast proceeded; nor did it suffer any interruption until the large drops that had been for some time plashing heavily upon the leaves, suddenly gave place to a burst of rain, which descended in such torrents that all idea of etiquette was forgotten; and the different individuals of the royal party rushed away in every direction to shelter themselves as best they might.

In the confusion, Mademoiselle de la Vallière was running she knew not where, when she found the king beside her; who politely taking her hand, hurried her towards a large tree, whose massy foliage offered a sure protection from the storm. Grateful for such distinguished care, but conscious of the observation it would not fail to create,

Louise would have retired; but the first words of the king, full of grave reproach, arrested her purpose; and throughout the whole of the two long hours that the storm endured, remorselessly pouring down upon feathered toques and satin draperies, it was remarked by those who were sufficiently near to note the circumstance, that Louis remained bareheaded, with his plumed hat in his hand; and that he maintained an earnest and animated conversation with his fair companion, to which only one interpretation could be given.

Thenceforward the king avoided all particular notice of Mademoiselle de la Vallière, when they met in the apartments of *Madame;* but when, in the evening, the ladies drove through the different avenues of the park, he quitted after a time the carriage of the princess, and mounting his horse, soon stationed himself beside the window of that which was occupied by Louise; while not content with thus expressing the increase of his passion, he sustained with her a daily correspondence, which convinced her only too well, had such a conviction still been wanting, of the extent of his attachment and the refinement of his mind.

Alarmed by the extreme beauty and eloquence of the letters which she thus received, lest the comparative imperfections of her own style should shock the taste of her royal admirer, Mademoiselle de la Vallière at length decided, after painful misgivings, and an almost unconquerable reluctance, to apply to the Marquis de Dangeau[1]

[1] Philip de Courcillon, Marquis de Dangeau, was born in La Beauce in 1638. He commanded a troop of cavalry under Turenne; and distinguished himself in Flanders in 1658. After the peace of the Pyrennees, he offered his services to Spain, which was then

to undertake the task of replying to them; little suspecting that those which had so much excited her apprehension proceeded from the same pen. Nor, strange to say, would this fact ever have transpired had not la Vallière herself, on an occasion when she felt oppressed by the compliments of the king on her rare talent, confessed to him with a trembling heart that she was unworthy of his praises; and revealed the name of their true author. To her great relief, Louis was equally frank; and they were enabled to laugh together over their mutual misgivings. This little incident, however, trifling as it was in itself, exhibited in their common friend a discretion so rare at court, that it founded the fortunes of M. de Dangeau.[1]

At that period the fashion of lotteries had obtained greatly at court; and the queen-mother, who, despite her increasing malady, was anxious not to be altogether overlooked although unable to leave her own apartments, was one of the most constant in providing these entertainments; to which, having only a small circle of her own, she was careful to invite *Madame* and her immediate friends and retinue. On one occasion the king drew the principal prize, which was a pair of bracelets of great value; when an immediate anxiety was felt to ascertain to whom they would be offered, although

endeavouring to reconquer Portugal; and on his return to France in 1667, he served throughout the campaign of Lille, and attended the king in all his expeditions as aide-de-camp. In 1673-4, he was appointed envoy-extraordinary to the electors of the Rhine, governor of Touraine, and councillor of state. His talents also caused him to be elected a member of the French Academy, and of the Academy of Science. Dangeau died in 1720; leaving behind him his *Memoirs*, and a *Journal of the Court of Louis XIV*, in 58 quarto vols. MS.

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

little doubt was entertained that they would become the property of *Madame Henriette;* and, accordingly, all eyes were turned in her direction, to detect at once the mingled pleasure and triumph with which she must welcome such an offering.

Meanwhile Mademoiselle de la Vallière stood apart, thinking, not of the ornaments, but of the hand which held them; and anxious merely for the moment when, released from the trammels of her service, she should once more see the king at her side, and listen to his words addressed only to herself. For a moment Louis sat motionless with the glittering baubles in his hand, as his keen eye swept the circle; and then slowly rising, he made his way through the throng of ladies, and presented them to la Vallière; who, having attentively examined their workmanship, returned them with a profound courtesy, remarking that they were indeed extremely beautiful.

"In that case, Mademoiselle;" said the king graciously; "they are in hands too fair to resign them;" and with a salutation as stately as her own he returned to his seat.

Madame bit her lip, and turned pale; but she soon recovered her self-possession, and made her acknowledgments most gracefully for the honour conferred upon one of her own suite; while the queen looked on with a quiet smile, utterly unsuspicious of the truth. Feelingly does la Vallière exclaim, as she records this incident of her life: "That confidence was a sad misfortune for us all. One tear from her would have saved me!"[1]

While the passion of Louis was augmenting from day to day, heightened by jealousy of every one who

[1] Mémoires de Madame de la Vallière.

approached its object, a new candidate for the favour of the fair maid of honour presented himself in the person of the superintendent of finance, Nicholas Fouquet; who, accustomed to see everything yield before the power of his gold, never doubted for an instant that he should be as successful in his pursuit of Mademoiselle de la Vallière as he had proved with so many other ladies of the court; and accordingly proceeded with little scruple and less delicacy to make his designs known to her, and to solicit her affections. He was, however, so coldly and sternly repulsed that any other suitor would have comprehended at once that his pursuit was hopeless; but Fouquet was unaccustomed to opposition, and disdained to perceive discouragement in the frowns of an indignant woman. Merely, therefore, changing his tactics, he deputed Madame du Plessis-Bellièvre, who was one of his fastest friends, to mention to his new idol that he had at her service the sum of twenty thousand pistoles, if she would condescend to accept it. Outraged by the proposal, la Vallière fixed her eyes steadily upon the unworthy messenger; and in a voice audible to all the circle, she desired that M. Fouquet might be informed all further advances on his part were needless, as twenty millions would not induce her so to degrade herself.

It is believed that this circumstance, which soon reached the ears of the king, contributed in no trifling degree to hasten the fall of the depraved minister; but Louis XIV. was by no means the only individual in his empire who had vowed the ruin of the licentious superintendent. M. de Laigues, who had privately married Madame de Chevreuse, and who was dissatisfied with Fouquet upon his own account, urged the duchess to injure him in the

estimation of the queen-mother; upon which Madame de Chevreuse, whose love of intrigue we have already mentioned, at once invited Anne of Austria to visit her at Dampierre, where she was met by le Tellier and Colbert; and it was there arranged that she should ascertain, if possible, the feeling of her son towards the offending minister.

As for some time past the king had refused to grant every favour solicited by the queen-mother, he was delighted, on the present occasion, to appear as if convinced by her arguments upon a point long decided in his own mind, and it was soon resolved between them that the superintendent should be arrested; but as he had a strong party in Paris, it was not deemed prudent to attempt his seizure in the capital; and a journey to Nantes was ultimately determined on, in order that Fouquet might be made prisoner in that city, at the same time that the island of Belleisle, which the minister had lately purchased, and which he was reported to be at that moment engaged in fortifying, should be taken possession of in the king's name.

Louis XIV. had, even from the very appointment of Fouquet, looked upon him with an unfavourable eye. We have already mentioned that during the life of Mazarin he rendered the sovereign more dependent than ever upon His Eminence, by compelling him to submit to the mortification of receiving as a loan at his hands the sums necessary to his ordinary expenditure, which should at once have been delivered to him by the superintendent himself. Nor was the feeling of distrust lessened by the dying words of the cardinal, who, while he expatiated to his royal master upon the official talents of Fouquet, at the same time warned him against his

cupidity and licentiousness, which were rendered only the more obnoxious by the intemperate conduct of the abbé his brother; who, although he did not scruple to profit by his relationship to the profligate minister, nevertheless exposed his vices, and betrayed his confidence.

The King acted in this emergency with both wisdom and indulgence. He took an early opportunity of informing Fouquet that he was aware of his extortions, and the uses to which he had applied their proceeds; but declared that he was willing to forget the past, and to retain him in office, provided he were disposed to do his duty with fidelity for the future; that he was resolved to ascertain the state of the public finances, as the most important feature of his government; and that as Fouquet was the only person who could afford him the necessary information, he entreated him to do so without disguise or subterfuge; assuring him, moreover, that he would find it difficult to deceive him, and that any such attempt would inevitably subject him to the most condign disgrace.

Somewhat startled by such an address, the superintendent had no sooner returned home than he consulted some of his friends as to the most prudent steps which he could adopt under circumstances so stringent; when they unanimously advised him to profit by the warning of the king, who had been forbearing enough to leave him an opportunity of retrieving himself, while it was yet time; but Fouquet, after having listened to their arguments, still remained of a different opinion. He could not bring himself to believe that a young sovereign of three and twenty would willingly imprison himself in his cabinet for

hours together, day after day, in order to examine dry reports and intricate calculations, when he could command pleasure and festivity without. He entertained no doubt that Louis would become disgusted by so arid an occupation long before he had obtained one glimpse through the complicated labyrinth; and even should it prove otherwise, Fouquet still flattered himself that he should find it an easy task to mystify and mislead a mere novice, and to compel him to renounce his undertaking, more than ever impressed with his dependence upon a minister able enough to regulate the movements of so stupendous a piece of machinery.

It is more than probable that the crafty superintendent would in fact have succeeded in his purpose, had not the king secretly confided to Colbert every evening the returns and reports furnished to him daily by Fouquet; which the young secretary was employed throughout the night in examining with untiring zeal, in order that he might be enabled to point out their errors, and to explain their perfidy. He laid bare before the king alike the exaggerations and deficiencies which were necessary to blind him to the extent of the rapine committed on his treasury; and on the morrow Louis addressed such observations to the superintendent as were calculated to convince him that he did not for a moment lose sight of his object, his aim being, if possible, to induce him to act with sincerity; although he soon lost all hope of being enabled to accomplish so desirable an object.[1]

Thus had several months elapsed; Fouquet striving to deceive, Louis appearing to be deceived, and Colbert

preventing him from being so; when the insult offered to Mademoiselle de la Vallière, and the representations of the queen-mother, determined the king to rid himself of so dishonest a minister; and we have shown the precaution which it was considered necessary to take in order to accomplish this end.

Fouquet had so long held sole control over the finances of the kingdom, and had been so little scrupulous in its expenditure, that there was scarcely an individual of the court who had not received from him either a present or a pension; he was said to have numerous partisans in Brittany, his birth-place, so zealous in his cause that they could raise all Provence at his slightest bidding; while the island of Belleisle was represented as his intended retreat should he ever incur the displeasure of the king; where, secure within his bristling walls and guarded ramparts, he might either defy the royal power; or deliver the island to the English, as the price of an asylum in that country.

It was consequently not surprising that the king should be anxious to avoid all chance of failure in his attempt to secure the person of the superintendent; who, although his subject, had in a great degree emancipated himself from his authority by his own precautions; and the first step upon which he resolved was that of marching troops into Brittany, on the pretext of certain seditious movements, in consequence of a demand which he had made that the province should raise a sum of money as a gratuitous gift to the crown; and the next, that of proceeding there himself, and of causing Fouquet to bear him company.

The superintendent was, at the moment when this

proposition was made to him, suffering from an attack of fever; but he made no plea of illness, being anxious to let the king see and understand the extent of his influence in Brittany; feeling convinced that it would secure to him the two-fold advantage of throwing Colbert into the back ground, and of impressing upon Louis the importance of his own support.

Still it would appear that Fouquet was not altogether free from apprehension; for on the arrival of the august party at Nantes, which was the term of the journey, he established himself in a residence at the extreme end of the town; whence, as it was afterwards ascertained, a subterranean passage opened upon the Loire, where a boat, thoroughly equipped, victualled, and provided with excellent rowers capable of overcoming all obstacles, was prepared to transport him on any alarm to Belleisle.

He had, moreover, caused couriers to be posted at different stations on the high road, with relays so disposed, that without being either seen or prevented, he could gain whatever place of safety he might select. Nevertheless, it is equally certain that he did not apprehend immediate danger, as he declared that he confided in the king, who was aware that during the lifetime of Mazarin, he had acted on many occasions in obedience to the express orders of that minister; while, in what had subsequently occurred, he had been sincere and faithful; and the king had appeared so satisfied with his explication that he firmly believed he had nothing to fear.

Rocking himself in this delusion, he was unguarded enough to invite Louis and all his court to a fête at his château at Vaux,[1] upon which he had expended the

enormous sum of fifteen millions.[1] No step could have been more weak, or ill-advised; for the king was little likely to forget, as he looked upon the splendour of Vaux, (by which that of Fontainebleau and St. Germain was utterly eclipsed,) that its owner had derived all his wealth from the public coffers; and that it had been accumulating at a period when he was himself in need of the funds which had here been so profusely lavished.

Every one who bore a distinguished name in France was bidden to this princely festival, which was destined to be commemorated by la Fontaine and Benserade; and where a prologue by Pélisson[2] was to be spoken, and a comedy by Molière to be played. The king

[1] The palace of Vaux le Vicomte, now called Vaux-Praslin, or simply Praslin, is a dependence of Maincy, a small village about a league from Melun. When purchased by Fouquet it was merely an obscure seigneurial residence; and a short time after his disgrace it became the property of Marshal Villars, and thence received the name of Vaux Villars. The son of the marshal suffered the ornamental water to run to waste, destroyed the gardens, and finally sold the estate to the Duke de Praslin, from whom it derived its new alias; and in whose family it still remains. It is surrounded by a moat filled with running water; the great entrance court is ornamented with porticos; the subordinate buildings are spacious and magnificent; and the paintings which decorate the apartments in excellent preservation. The park is of considerable extent.

[2] Paul Pélisson Tontanier was a native of Béziers, and was born in 1624. He was the descendant of a Protestant family long distinguished in the legal profession. He fixed his residence in Paris in 1652, and purchased the charge of royal secretary; became a state councillor in 1660, and head clerk of Fouquet, of whom he shared all the fortunes. When imprisoned in the Bastille he compiled, in defence of his friend, three Memorials, which are considered to be masterpieces of judicial eloquence, and monuments of the most unalterable friendship. After a captivity of five years

arrived at the château, accompanied by an escort of musketeers, and was received at the gates by his imprudent host; who had no sooner welcomed him, than he entered the park, followed by the whole court, and found himself surrounded by a scene of enchantment, for which, despite all that he had heard of the gorgeous palace of his minister, he was still far from being prepared. A cloud passed over his brow; and the smile was very bitter with which he turned towards Fouquet and remarked, "I shall never again, Sir, venture to invite you to visit me: you would find yourself inconvenienced."

The epigram was too pointed to fail in its effect, and for a moment Fouquet turned pale; but he soon rallied, and persisted in doing the honours of his sumptuous home to the mortified sovereign, with an ostentatious detail which left no one of its marvels unremarked.

The first surprise was the sudden play of the fountains, a luxury at that period almost unknown in France, where a solitary attempt of this description had been made by Henry IV. at St. Germain. The astonished admiration of the spectators may therefore be imagined, when it is stated that the superintendent had purchased and pulled down three villages, in order that the water by which they were supplied might be conducted, from a distance of five leagues in every direction, into vast reservoirs of marble manufactured in Italy.

As twilight deepened, the waters suddenly ceased their play; and a splendid banquet supervened; after which the *Fâcheux* of Molière was represented; and succeeded by

he was liberated by order of Louis XIV, who honoured his consistency, and appointed him historiographer to the crown. In 1693 he died, a member of the French Academy.

a splendid pyrotechnic display; while the ball, which terminated the amusements, was protracted until daylight. Before its commencement Louis made a tour of the château, accompanied by its owner; and was compelled to acknowledge that nothing, in all probability, existed throughout Europe which could compete with it in magnificence.

During the ball, Mademoiselle de la Vallière, having danced several *courantes* with the king, became fatigued by the noise and excitement, and expressed a wish to retire for a time from the saloon; upon which Louis, drawing her arm through his, led her in her turn through the splendid suite of rooms, by which he had been at once astonished and offended; and bade her remark the ostentation with which M. Fouquet had introduced his armorial bearings on all sides, and in every compartment of the ceilings. The shield bore a squirrel, with the motto, *Quò non ascendam?* and as she was engaged in reading it, Colbert chanced to enter the apartment, of whom she inquired its meaning.

"It signifies, 'To what height may I not attain?' Madam; and it is easily understood by those who know the boldness of the squirrel, or that of his master," replied the secretary, with marked emphasis.

Louis bit his lip.

At that particular moment M. Pélisson chanced to pass, and over hearing the rejoinder, he remarked with a profound bow, as he fixed his eyes steadily upon Colbert, while he addressed the king: "Your Majesty has probably not remarked that in every instance the squirrel is pursued by an adder." And then, with a second salutation, he disappeared.

Colbert turned pale, and his eyes flashed; while the anger of the king was so violent that he desired the captain of his musketeers might be instantly ordered to attend him.

Mademoiselle de la Vallière, who understood only too well the meaning of this summons, immediately threw herself at his feet, and entreated that he would not compromise his dignity by arresting a man who was his host, whatever might be his crime; or terminate a fête, given in his own honour, by making it the medium of an act of violence. Fortunately, she at the moment caught sight of the queen-mother, who was entering a lateral apartment; and hastily springing from her knees, she hurried to inform her of the king's intentions, and besought her interference. Not a moment was lost; and with considerable difficulty Louis was at length induced to delay his vengeance, and to return to Fontainebleau; only in part consoled for the humiliation to which he had been subjected, by a firm determination that the insult should never be repeated.

A fortnight after the ill-omened fête at Vaux the court proceeded to Nantes, the king pretexting the state of his health, and his anxiety to show so fine a city to the queen. He was preceded by the three ministers; Fouquet and his friend Lionne in one barge impelled by eight rowers, and Colbert in a second similarly provided; and as they passed along the river, each endeavouring to pass the other, a courtier remarked that one of the two would suffer shipwreck at Nantes. The king arrived on the following day, having travelled post, attended by several of his confidential friends, among whom was the Marquis de Puiguilain, whose favour continued undiminished; and

his first question was if le Tellier had preceded him. On being answered in the affirmative, he desired that inquiries might be made as to the health of M. Fouquet, whose fever had augmented; and how he had borne the journey, as he wished to see him in the course of the day.

The messenger, however, met the superintendent on his way to the castle of Nantes to pay his respects to His Majesty; but on the morrow the same ceremony was observed; when M. de Brienne found him much worse in health, but in high spirits; and after he had acquitted himself of his embassy, and was taking his leave, the invalid inquired in a cheerful tone what were the news at court.

"That you are about to be arrested," was the reply.

"You are misinformed, my good friend," said Fouquet with a smile; "it is Colbert who is about to be arrested, and not myself."

"Are you sure of this?" asked Brienne.

"Perfectly; for it was I who gave the order for him to be conducted to the castle of Angers; and it was Pélisson who paid the workmen entrusted to place the prison beyond all chance of successful assault."

On his return Louis XIV. questioned the young secretary very minutely with regard to the health of the superintendent, who was attacked by his malady on alternate days; but his manner convinced Brienne that the minister was lost, as in speaking of him the king no longer styled him M. Fouquet, but simply Fouquet; and when he was at length dismissed, Louis desired him to be in attendance at an early hour on the following morning, and to bring Fouquet with him, as he was going to hunt.

He was, however, again anticipated by the superintendent, who having been informed that the king desired to see him before he left the castle, was in attendance at six o'clock, little suspecting that all was prepared for his arrest; and after a conference of half an hour he was returning quietly through the gallery when he was met by M. de la Feuillade,[1] who told him in a low voice to be cautious, as orders had been issued against him.

For the first time Fouquet began to quail, as he could not conceal from himself that the manner of the king had been constrained and absent; and this fact, coupled with the hint of the duke, induced him when he gained the court-yard, to throw himself into the carriage of one of his friends, instead of his own, with the intention of making his escape. He had already succeeded in passing the gates, and entering the town, when Artagnan, who commanded the musketeers, and to whom his arrest had been entrusted, seized him as he was about to turn into a lateral street; transferred him to his own coach; and conveyed him, without stopping either day or night, to the castle of Angers, which he had caused to be prepared for the reception of

[1] Francis d'Aubusson, Duke de la Feuillade, was a descendant of the Dukes of Aubusson; served under Louis XIV, and became a Marshal of France, and colonel of the French guards. In 1664 he commanded the French forces at the battle of St. Gothard, and was created Duke de Roanne. In 1668 he went to the relief of Candia, then besieged by Achmet-Kioperli. He made the campaign of Holland; followed the king in Franche-Comté; and terminated the conquest of that province by the capture of Dôle, Salins, &c. In 1676 he commanded the army in Flanders; and in 1678 he was at the head of the navy. In 1681 he obtained the government of Dauphiny, and ultimately died in 1691. He erected, at his own expense, a statue of Louis XIV. in the *Place des Victoires*.

Colbert; and thus this modern Haman found that the pains which he had taken to strengthen the external fortifications of the prison, only rendered his own prospect of escape utterly hopeless. His wife and children were at the same time removed to Limoges; and seals placed upon all his property; while an attendant who was present at his arrest, hastened to secure one of the private relays which had been prepared in case of emergency; and made the journey to Paris with such speed, that the news of his capture was known to all the friends of the fallen minister twelve hours before the arrival of the courier despatched to the queen-mother.

During this interval many of Fouquet's papers might have been secured, especially in his house at St. Mandé, where he had deposited a vast number; and the abbé his brother suggested, that without delaying to examine them, they should at once be collected and burned to the last fragment; declaring that the value of what would be thus destroyed on the one hand, would bear no proportion to the benefit of that which would be annihilated on the other. Madame Duplessis-Belièvre, however, who was the fast friend and confidant of the minister, objected to so extreme a measure; feeling convinced that, in the anxiety of mind which he had lately suffered, he could not have failed to obliterate everything which might injure either himself or others. She was, however, unfortunately mistaken. The superintendent was in the habit of preserving every communication that he received, whatever might be its nature: proposals, requests, acknowledgments, propositions, billets-doux; nothing was destroyed; and the result of such a system, pursued by such a man

as Fouquet, may be readily understood. All these multitudinous papers were rigidly examined by the king and the queen-mother; and a great and well-founded terror spread through the court when this fact was ascertained; for numerous were the hitherto fair and noble names which were destined to be for ever sullied by the disclosures they contained.

Few there were, either married or single, says Madame de Motteville, who had not sacrificed to the golden calf; and it was proved that the poets well understood their vocation when they wrote the fable of Danaë and the shower of gold.

After the arrest of Fouquet the royal party had immediately returned to Fontainebleau; and while the examinations were pending, all his friends became greatly alarmed for the result; and the rather as being principally artists and men of letters, without any interest at court, they were unable to make an effort in his behalf. It was soon rumoured that among his female correspondents, the superintendent had numbered Madame de Sévigné; whose letters had, like the rest, passed through the hands of the king: and more than one of those who knew themselves to be compromised, rejoiced at the idea of being partially excused by the companionship of this hitherto irreproachable name. Their triumph was, however, of short duration.

The life of Madame de Sévigné, despite the buoyancy of heart which she retained until her death, had been one of suffering and difficulty. Married in youth to a profligate, who eventually lost his life in a duel, disgraceful to his memory both as a husband and a father; a widow

at five and twenty, agreeable in person, and accomplished in mind; Madame de Sévigné had withstood every temptation to a second alliance, devoting herself to the care and education of her children with a tenderness and perseverance perfectly exemplary; while that she did not meet with all the support and encouragement from her own family which she might justly have claimed under these circumstances, is sufficiently evident from a letter addressed to her by her cousin Bussy-Rabutin, so early as the year 1654, in which that shallow-hearted and libertine nobleman, who was aware that both Fouquet and the Prince de Conti had made dishonourable advances to Madame de Sévigné, and who feared that from her continued resistance they would become wearied of their pursuit; attacked her by arguments as disgraceful as they were revolting, in order to induce her to comply with their proposals.

He did not, however, estimate at its just value the noble nature which he strove to abase. The wages of immorality had no attraction in the eyes of Madame de Sévigné. Her path of duty lay well defined before her; and the thorns and briers by which it was beset she was content to pluck away as she advanced; strengthened in the heaviest hour of her toil by the aid of an approving conscience.

It was stated that both Anne of Austria and her son were startled when the signature of Marie Rabutin Chantal met their eyes; but their consternation was not of long continuance; while the subject of her communication, and her own perfect and womanly feeling on learning the discovery of her letters among the private papers of

Fouquet, are admirably developed in the following note to M. de Pomponne.[1]

"At the Rocks, this 11th Oct. 1661.

"There is nothing more true than that friendship becomes more warm when people are interested in the same subject; you have so obligingly written to me to that effect, that I can make you no better reply than by the assurance that I have the same sentiments towards yourself which you entertain for me; and that, in one word, I both honour and esteem you in a high degree. But what say you of all that has been found in these caskets? Should you ever have believed that my poor letters, full of the marriage of M. de la Trousse, and all the affairs of his family, would have been discovered so mysteriously situated? I assure you that, whatever credit I may derive from those who do me justice for having had with him no other commerce than this, I am nevertheless painfully wounded to find that I am compelled to justify myself, and perhaps very uselessly, towards a thousand people who will never comprehend the fact. I think that you will easily understand the grief caused by such a necessity to a heart like mine. I beseech you to say all you know upon this point; I cannot have friends enough upon such an occasion."[2]

Strong in her innocence, Madame de Sévigné did not, consequently, hesitate to accompany Mademoiselle de Scudéry,[3] when she declared her intention of waiting

[1] Simon Arnauld, Marquis de Pomponne, afterwards minister for foreign affairs.

[2] Lettres de Madame de Sévigné.

[3] Madelaine de Scudéry was born at Havre in 1607, and went at an early age to Paris, where she became an author from necessity;

upon la Vallière, to solicit her interest in favour of the condemned minister; and they found a willing coadjutor in the gentle Louise, who was as anxious to preserve the life of Fouquet as the warmest of his friends; and who exerted all her influence over the mind of the king to induce his mercy; an attempt in which, seconded by the queen-mother, (who amid all her indignation was desirous that he should not suffer the extreme penalty of his offences,) she happily succeeded.

a fact which did not, however, militate against her admission to the best society; while her wit made her a welcome addition to all the literary circles of the time. Her novels are numerous, and obtained great success, although they are wanting in nature, and essentially French as regards the persons described. Her principal works are *Cyrus, Clelia, Ibrahim, Matilda of Aquilar, Almahida, Célanira,* &c. She died in 1701.

CHAPTER XV.

BIRTH OF A DAUPHIN—PROSPERITY OF LOUIS XIV.—FAVOUR OF LA VALLIÈRE—COURT-FESTIVALS—INSULT TO THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR IN LONDON—APOLOGY OF PHILIP IV.—RUPTURE BETWEEN FRANCE AND ROME—FALL OF LA VALLIÈRE—HER REMORSE—EXILED FROM THE COURT OF THE QUEEN-MOTHER—HER FLIGHT TO THE CARMELITE CONVENT—THE RECONCILIATION—SHE RETURNS TO COURT—MARRIAGE OF MARIANNE DE MANCINI—COMMENCEMENT OF VERSAILLES—ITS PROGRESS—FÊTE AT VERSAILLES—LA PRINCESSE D'ÉLIDE OF MOLIÈRE—THREE FIRST ACTS OF THE TARTUFFE—THE REPRESENTATION FORBIDDEN—PERSEVERANCE OF MOLIÈRE—NATIONAL MONUMENTS—THE KNIGHTS OF THE HOLY GHOST—THE BLUE OVER-COATS—M. DE CONDÉ A COURTIER—UNHAPPINESS OF LA VALLIÈRE—THE SURREPTITIOUS LETTER—THE VICTIMS—THE CONSPIRACY—THE LETTER INTERCEPTED—TREACHERY OF THE MARQUIS DE VARDES—SEVERITY OF MADAME TO LA VALLIÈRE—LA VALLIÈRE BECOMES A MOTHER—ARRIVAL OF THE CROWN-PRINCE OF DENMARK—MADEMOISELLE WEARIES OF HER EXILE—THE HAND OF MADEMOISELLE IS OFFERED BY LOUIS XIV. TO THE PRINCE OF DENMARK—SHE RETURNS TO COURT—SHE REJECTS THE PRINCE—DECLARATION OF THE KING—DEPRAVITY OF THE FRENCH COURT—LA VALLIÈRE RECEIVED BY THE QUEEN-MOTHER—PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED AS THE MISTRESS OF THE KING—PASSION OF THE COUNT DE GUICHE FOR MADAME—HE IS SENT TO LORRAINE, TO TAKE THE COMMAND OF THE ROYAL FORCES.

THE pleasures of Fontainebleau soon effaced all memory of the imprisoned superintendent; and the birth of a dauphin, which took place on the 1st of November, (1661,) completed the happiness of Louis XIV. Every-

thing by which he could be affected appeared subject to the influence of his will; the treaty of the Pyrennees had terminated a long and exhausting war; Mazarin, by whose authority he had been oppressed, was in his grave; Fouquet, by whom he had been rivalled in the magnificence upon which he prided himself, was his prisoner; the queen, to whom he was indifferent, had given him an heir to the throne; and Mademoiselle de la Vallière, whom he loved, already began to resist less steadily the encroachments of his passion; while the religious struggle which was fated to recommence hereafter, was for the moment appeased by the dispossession of the Calvinists of all the privileges which the Edict of Nantes was intended to secure to them; and who only continued their opposition through the medium of a secret system of proselytism destined on a future day to convulse once more the whole face of the kingdom. This was, moreover, so cautiously pursued, that no suspicion of its extent disturbed, even for a moment, the apparent calm; and Louis, satisfied that he had at length accomplished a general pacification which he should be enabled to maintain, resigned himself wholly to a career of pleasure.

Every festival had Mademoiselle de la Vallière for its object; and although it professed to have no view save that of gratifying the queen, it was not only a homage offered by the king to the reigning favourite, but it also conduced to the aggrandizement of royalty, by weakening the resources of that haughty nobility, which, since the reign of Francis II, had perpetually disturbed the repose of France; for in order to compete with the magnificence of the monarch, the greater portion of those around him mortgaged and even dissipated their patrimony; and when these measures were no longer practicable, became involved in debt;

and, once ruined, found themselves entirely dependent upon the sovereign; while the extraordinary number of foreigners who were attracted to Paris by the perpetual fêtes, produced a revenue from the customs which exceeded that disbursed by the treasury. It was during this period that the famous tilting-match took place in the Place Royale, to which it gave the name that it still bears.

Throughout the whole of the winter the court continued immersed in pleasure; and several ballets were produced, in which the king bore a conspicuous part, seeking so little to disguise his passion for la Vallière that he was careful every evening to ascertain the colours she would wear on the morrow, in order that he might appear in the same. In order, also, to excite her to a greater display of magnificence, he overwhelmed her with jewels and costly dresses; but she shrank so resolutely from all which could tend to make her conspicuous, that he could not induce her to abandon the simplicity in which she gloried to perceive that she was equally attractive in his eyes.

On one occasion the king had joined the evening circle of *Madame*, and was, according to his usual habit, conversing with her fair maid of honour, when some despatches were delivered to him which were declared to be of immediate importance. He accordingly seated himself near a table to examine them; and it was soon remarked by every one that his cheek became blanched, and that he bit his lips with a violence which indicated suppressed passion. Nevertheless not a word escaped him until he had read them to an end, when he rose; and crushing the despatches convulsively between his fingers, exclaimed haughtily:—

"Here are news for you, gentlemen! Our ambassador in London has been publicly insulted by the Spanish envoy. What think you of this, gentlemen? Shall I wait to revenge the insult of my father-in-law until my moustache is as long as his own? He without doubt imagines that we are still under the guardianship of the cardinal. M. le Tellier, let my ambassador at Madrid leave that city instantly; and the Spanish envoy quit Paris within four and twenty hours. The conferences of Flanders are at an end; and if the superiority of our crown is not recognised publicly by Spain, she may hold herself prepared to renew the war."

The consternation excited by these words will admit of no description; and even le Tellier hesitated for a moment as though he doubted the evidence of his senses; but he was soon undeceived by Louis, who in a still higher tone demanded if he had not understood his orders; desiring him at the same time to assemble the council, at which he would preside within an hour.

This done, the king once more approached the ladies who were present, and continued the conversation which had been so unpleasantly interrupted, as calmly as though nothing had occurred to ruffle his temper. The affront he had received was, nevertheless, of a very serious character, and one to which, constituted as he was, he could not fail to be susceptible. An ambassador from Sweden had arrived in England; and on his entrance the Count d'Estrade, the French representative, and the Baron de Vateville, the representative of Spain, had disputed a point of precedence. The Spaniard, by a greater profusion and a more numerous retinue, had gained over the populace; and having caused the horses which drew

W. Greatbatch sc.

LOUIS XIV.

FROM A RARE PRINT BY VAN SCHUPPEN, AFTER MIGNARD [1662]

London: Richard Bentley, 184

the carriages of M. d'Estrade to be killed, and his attendants wounded and dispersed, the Spaniards had taken possession of the contested right without sheathing their swords.

The orders of Louis XIV. were obeyed. M. d'Estrade was recalled; the Baron de Vateville dismissed the kingdom; and the conferences which were still in progress in Flanders on the subject of the limits of the respective nations, were suddenly terminated; while a message was despatched from the French king to Philip IV, to inform him that if he did not immediately recognise the supremacy of his crown, and repair the insult to which it had been subjected, by a formal apology, the peace was at an end.

The Spanish sovereign, who was unwilling to plunge his kingdom once more into bloodshed for so insignificant a consideration as the precedence of an ambassador, consented to heal the wounded pride of his tenacious son-in-law; and accordingly, on the 24th March, 1662, the Count de Fuentes waited upon the offended monarch at Fontainebleau, where, in the presence of all the foreign ministers then resident at the court of France, he declared in the name of his royal master, that thenceforward the Spanish ambassadors should never again compete with those of France; a concession which, if it did not altogether admit the pre-eminence of Louis, at least betrayed the weakness of Spain.[1]

Scarcely had this trifling affair been settled in a manner which redounded so greatly to the honour of the French king, than he found himself called upon to decide another of

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle. *Francheville.*

a similar description, but in which he was less personally interested. The Duke de Créqui,[1] who was ambassador at Rome, had revolted the Roman people, and still more the Roman nobility, by his overweening haughtiness, and had consequently become eminently unpopular; while his servants, exaggerating his error, had committed many excesses, even proceeding so far as to attack the night-watch of the city; and upon one occasion, some of his lacqueys amused themselves by charging a squadron of the Pope's Corsican guard, sword in hand, and putting them to flight.

The whole corps incensed, and privately encouraged by Don Mario Chigi, the brother of Alexander VII, who detested the Duke de Créqui, assembled in arms round the residence of the ambassador, and fired upon the carriage of the duchess as she was in the act of alighting, killing a page, and wounding several of her attendants; upon which M. de Créqui immediately left Rome, accusing the relatives of the Pope, and even the Pope himself, of having sanctioned the assassination. Alexander delayed as long as he was able to do so any offer of reparation, having so little opinion of the steadiness of the French, as to believe that if he temporized they would soon forget their annoyance; but, finally, he caused one of the Corsicans

[1] Charles de Créqui, de Blanchefort, et de Canaples, Prince de Poix, governor of Dauphiny, peer and marshal of France, became Duke de Lesdiguières by his marriage with Madelaine de Bonne, daughter of the celebrated Connétable de Lesdiguières. His duel with Don Philippin the bastard of Savoy, on the subject of a scarf, in which he killed his antagonist, contributed in no small degree to establish his reputation. He took Pignerol and La Maurienne in 1630, was sent ambassador to Rome in 1633, defeated the Spanish forces at the battle of Tésin in 1636, and was killed by a cannon ball at the siege of Bremen.

and a constable to be hanged at the end of four months; and banished the governor of the city, who was suspected of having authorized the outrage. He was, however, compelled to more definitive measures by the intelligence that Louis XIV. threatened to besiege Rome, that he was already landing troops in Italy, and that the command had been given to the Marshal du Plessis-Praslin.[1] The affair had become a national quarrel, and the King of France was evidently resolved that it should involve no dishonour to his own kingdom; while the Pope, on his side, was equally determined not to yield so long as he possessed one hope of overcoming his adversary; and accordingly he supplicated the mediation of all the Roman Catholic princes: but the holy father had fallen upon evil times; Germany was threatened by the Turks; and Spain was hampered by an unsuccessful war against Portugal.

The Roman court consequently only irritated Louis, without having it in its power to injure him; while the parliament of Provence cited the Pope, and seized the *comtat* of Avignon. In earlier times an excommunication from Rome would have been the immediate result of so decided a proceeding, but such an expedient had now ceased to be available, and would only have excited ridicule. Thus the Head of the Church found himself compelled to bend to circumstances; to exile his own brother from Rome; and to announce his intention of

[1] Cæsar de Choiseuil du Plessis-Praslin, duke and peer of France, was created marshal of France in 1645, and in 1648 won the battle of Francheron, and in 1650 that of Réthel against Marshal Turenne, who at that period commanded the Spanish army. He died in Paris in 1673, at the advanced age of 78 years.

sending his nephew as *Legate à latere*, to France, to offer satisfaction to the offended dignity of its monarch.[1]

Shortly after this event the unfortunate la Vallière sacrificed her reputation to her ardent passion for the king; but her remorse was so great, that, far from parading her disgrace as most of those around her would have done, she was so prostrated by shame as to absent herself, so far as her court duties would permit, from all society; and the agony of her repentance was so violent as to occasion much embarrassment to her royal lover; while the reproaches of the queen-mother, and the deep melancholy of Maria Theresa, added to his annoyance. The young queen had reluctantly admitted the conviction of this new misfortune; but two incidents soon occurred which robbed her even of the equivocal happiness of doubt.

A young valet-de-chambre of the king, named Belloc, had invented a species of interlude, consisting of dialogues interspersed with dances, which obtained great favour at court, where they were enacted by all the principal persons of the royal circle, including Louis himself. On a particular occasion one of these interludes, of which the subject had been prompted by the king, was represented in the queen's apartments; and the boldness with which it shadowed forth the love of the monarch for la Vallière was so great, that long ere its conclusion a score of whispers had identified the characters; and she herself retired to her chamber, trembling at its probable effect upon those whom it was so well calculated to wound.

[1] Siècle de Louis XIV.

A few days only passed over ere she was summoned to the presence of the queen-mother; and the circumstance was so unusual, that Louise hesitated whether she should obey without previously consulting the king. A second messenger, however, urging her to hasten, left her no alternative; and with a sinking heart she was ushered into the apartment of Anne of Austria, whom she found closeted with *Madame*. There was an expression of triumph playing about the lip of the princess, which at once convinced Mademoiselle de la Vallière that she was summoned on no indifferent subject; and one glance at the clouded brow of the queen-mother confirmed her in her conviction. Her fears had not outrun the truth. Coldly, haughtily, and peremptorily, Anne of Austria declared her dismission from the court; adding that she was immediately to return whence she came, and that Madame de Choisy would conduct her to her home.

With a trembling heart la Vallière attempted to inquire the nature of her offence; but Anne of Austria indignantly interposed, saying that it sufficed that there could not be two queens of France; after which she rose, and, followed by *Madame*, retired to an inner apartment.

The unhappy girl staggered back to her room almost unconsciously. A full conviction of the disgrace which she had brought upon herself, bowed her to the dust. She was about to be ignominiously driven from the court; to meet her mother as a guilty and condemned wretch, to whom the whole world was now only one wide desolation; while at intervals the idea that she was to be for ever separated from the king dried her tears with the scorching fever of despair. No one intruded upon her solitude throughout the day, and she gave a free course

to the anguish by which she was oppressed; but with the twilight Louis entered her apartment, and finding her exhausted with weeping, insisted on learning the cause of her distress. Anxious though she was that he should know all, she shrank from exciting the storm which she was well aware must follow; and she persisted in withholding her secret, despite the entreaties, reproaches, and even threats of the king; who eventually, displeased by her pertinacity, rose from her side, and without uttering another word, left the room.

As he disappeared, Mademoiselle de la Vallière sank back, tearless and hopeless. She was now indeed alone, for even he for whom she had suffered had abandoned her; and hours went by before she again ventured to lift her head. After a time, however, she remembered that a compact had once been made between herself and her royal lover, that in the event of any misunderstanding, a night should not be suffered to elapse without a reconciliation. Her heart again beat more freely. He would not fail her; he could not forget his promise—he would write to tell her that his anger against her was at an end——And so she waited, and watched, and counted every hour as it was proclaimed by the belfrey of the palace; but she waited and watched in vain; and when at length, after this long and weary night, the daylight streamed through the silken curtains of her chamber, she threw herself upon her knees; and praying that God would not cast away the victim who was thus rejected by the world, she hastened with a burning cheek and a tearless eye to collect a few necessary articles of clothing, and throwing on her veil and mantle, rushed down a private staircase, and escaped into the street. In this dis-

tracted state of mind she pursued her way to Chaillot, and reached the convent of the Sisters of St. Mary, where she was detained for a considerable time in the parlour; but at length the grating was opened, and a portress appeared, who, on her request to be admitted to the abbess, informed her that all the community were at their devotions, and could not be seen by any one.

It was in vain that the poor fugitive entreated, and asserted her intention of taking the vows; she could extort no other answer; and the portress withdrew, leaving her sitting upon a wooden bench, desolate and heartstruck. For two hours she remained motionless, with her eyes fixed upon the grating, but it continued closed; even the dreary refuge of this poor and obscure convent was denied to her; even the house of religion had barred its doors against her. She could bear up no longer; from the previous morning she had not tasted food; and the fatigue of body and anguish of mind which she had undergone, combined with this unaccustomed fast, had exhausted her slight remains of strength; a sullen torpor gradually overcame her faculties; and eventually she fell upon the paved floor, cold and insensible.

Early in the morning the king was informed of the disappearance of Mademoiselle de la Vallière; and he had no sooner learned the fact than he hastened to the Tuileries to question *Madame*, who either was, or affected to be, utterly ignorant of her fate. Nor was he more fortunate in his inquiries of the queen-mother; who, while she declared her inability to give him the information that he sought, reproached him with his want of self-command, remarking that he had no mastery over himself.

"It may be so," he exclaimed, goaded by her words; "but if I cannot control myself, I shall at least know how to control those who outrage me."

As yet he had obtained no clue to the retreat of his mistress, but Louis was not to be discouraged, and he adopted such efficient measures as, ere long, led him to a knowledge of the convent to which the unhappy fugitive had been seen to bend her steps. In another instant he was on horseback, and followed by a single page, galloped off in the direction of Chaillot, where, as no warning had been given of his approach, the grating remained inhospitably closed, and he found the wretched girl still stretched on the pavement.

It was long ere Louise was aware whose tears were falling fast upon her face, and whose hands had clasped her own. After a time, however, she recognised the king; and at length was enabled to confide to him the reason of her flight, and to implore him to leave her free to fulfil the resolution she had formed; but Louis was deaf to her entreaties, and finally succeeded in inducing her to pardon the past, and to return. It was not without compunction that she suffered herself to be persuaded, but her passion for the king ultimately triumphed over her scruples; and the page was despatched for a carriage, in which, bathed in tears, half joy, half bitterness, she reached Paris, and once more found herself under the roof of that palace which only a few hours previously she believed that she had quitted for ever.

It was with considerable difficulty that the king prevailed upon *Madame* to restore to Mademoiselle de la Vallière the place in her household from which she had been so abruptly dismissed; but he was firm in his deter-

mination; and eventually, although with a reluctance which she made no attempt to disguise, she consented to his wishes; when, regardless of the manner of the concession, Louis thanked her for her compliance, and hastened to inform the anxious maid of honour of the success of his suit.

A short time subsequently the Duke de Bouillon became the husband of Marianne de Mancini, the only niece whom the cardinal had left unmarried; but this alliance created little sensation at court. Madame de Soissons gave a supper on the occasion, at which the queen consented to appear; and then the affair was forgotten.

Meanwhile Louis had never overcome the mortification to which he had been subjected at Vaux; and the determination which he had then formed to construct for himself a palace of which the splendour should be unapproachable by any subject, whatever might be his resources. He resolved not to build only for the age, but for futurity; and after considerable hesitation, he at length fixed upon the park of Versailles as its site.[1]

[1] "Versailles possessed, as early as the 10th century, a fief and a seigneurial manor, situated on the slope of the hill which overlooks the wood of Satory; on the spot since covered by the labyrinth known as the Queen's Grove; and labour had not yet lowered this soil, which was on the same level as the sheet of water. Several large farms, acquired at different periods, extended the domain to the village of Choisy-au-Beuf, which Louis XIV. enclosed in the great park. The most ancient deed referring to Versailles, bears the date of 1037. * * L'Etoile, in his *Memoirs* (Vol. I. p. 26,) asserts that Catherine de Medicis caused the secretary of state, Loménie, to be strangled, in order that the Count de Retz might possess the château of Versailles; but this fact is improbable. Anthony de Loménie, who enjoyed the intimacy of Henry IV, could easily have obtained the restitution of the domain, if it had been thus

Louis XIII, whose hunting parties frequently took place in the forest of Versailles, and who, on one occasion, overtaken by the darkness near a small elevation above the road leading to St. Leger, was compelled to pass the night in a mill, while his attendants and the hounds were housed in the cottage of a waggoner; caused a small pavilion, of which some traces may still be seen in a street of the town, to be erected for his future accommodation, should he again chance to be benighted in that neighbourhood; and ultimately purchased a sufficient extent of land to enable him to erect a château, and to form a park in the centre of the forest; when, having decided that the house should stand upon the rise then occupied by the windmill in which he had formerly taken shelter, he left his architect Lemercier at liberty to construct it according to his own taste.

The result was by no means commensurate with the dignity of its owner; for although the building was not devoid of a certain elegance, it was insignificant in size, and was styled by St. Simon a "pasteboard palace;" while Bassompierre asserts that it was a residence of which no nobleman would have had cause to feel vain. Nor did Louis XIV, when he finally resolved to embellish Versailles, in all probability, contemplate the vast changes which were ultimately effected there; for, in the first instance, he made no outlay save upon the gardens, leaving the little palace precisely as it stood; in which state it still existed so late as in 1664, when he gave there those mar-

usurped; while, on the contrary, it is well known that it was from the tutor of the children of Martial de Loménie, that Albert de Gondi purchased the château, which was at the time in a state of ruin."—*Versailles Ancien et Moderne.*

vellous entertainments which became matter of European celebrity; and whose effect he had awaited before he resolved upon the great pecuniary sacrifice which a more extended undertaking must necessarily involve.

Le Notre, entrusted with the disposition of the gardens, profited by a moment of enthusiasm on the part of the king, while examining the plan which he proposed, and of a consent wrung from him with considerable difficulty, to cut down during a single night a great portion of the masses of ornamental timber which had been planted by Louis XIII; and the magnificence of the result excused him in the eyes of his royal master for having ventured to exceed his orders.

Mansard,[1] however, to whom the erection of the palace was confided, was less fortunate; for by no argument which he was able to adduce, could he prevail upon the monarch to sanction the demolition of the *pasteboard palace* which had been the chosen refuge of his father, when, offended by the haughtiness of Mary de Medicis towards the cardinal, he sought to escape from becoming the witness of scenes which wounded alike his pride and his filial respect. In vain did Mansard represent, that by his persistance in preserving the chamber where he was born, the Cardinal de Richelieu had ruined the plan of the

[1] Jules Hardouin Mansard, born in 1635, became first architect to the king, knight of St. Michael, and comptroller and director-general of buildings, arts, and manufactures. It was after the designs of this famous architect that the gallery of the Palais-Royal, the Place Louis-le-Grand, and that des Victoires were constructed. He also built the dome of the Hôtel des Invalides, and planned the establishment of St. Cyr, the cascade of St. Cloud, the menagérie, orangery, and stables of the palace of Versailles; and built the Trianon. He was protecting member of the royal academy of painting and sculpture; and died in 1708.

château which he had built; the king only smiled; and when the architect, as a last hope, dilated upon the bad condition of the present edifice, his reply was to the effect that if it were found absolutely necessary to pull it down, he should not oppose the measure, but that it must be rebuilt precisely as it stood; and thus the unfortunate Mansard found himself without any alternative save that of concealing as much as possible the obnoxious edifice by the regal pile which was about to rise around it.[1]

We have alluded in this rapid sketch to the magnificent fêtes given in the gardens of Versailles in 1664; but they were so remarkable as to merit more special mention, alike from their magnificence, their singularity, and their intellectual attractions, which added a new grace to the profuse splendour that was their main characteristic. Versailles had even then become a delightful residence,. although it as yet betrayed no vestige of its after-greatness.

Early in the spring, the king, followed by a court composed of six hundred individuals, the whole of whose personal expenses were defrayed, as well as those of their respective attendants, took up his abode at Versailles; and the marvellous rapidity with which his artificers erected the stages, amphitheatres, and porticoes, all elaborately ornamented, which were required in succession to give effect to the various entertainments, was not one of the least prodigies of the festival. The fêtes commenced by a *carrousel*, in which all those who were to compete appeared in review order on the previous

[1] Versailles Ancien et Moderne.

day, preceded by heralds-at-arms, pages, and equerries, who bore their shields and devices; on the former of which were written in letters of gold verses written for the occasion by Périgni and Benserade.

The king represented Roger; and all the crown jewels sparkled upon his dress and on the housing of his charger. The queen, attended by three hundred ladies, seated under triumphal arches, were the spectators of the procession. The cavalcade was followed by a gilded car, eighteen feet in height, fifteen in width, and twenty-four in length, representing the chariot of the sun. The four ages of gold, silver, steel, and iron, the signs of the zodiac, the seasons, and the hours, followed immediately behind it; while the lists were carried by shepherds, and adjusted amid flourishes of trumpets, contrasted at intervals by the music of bagpipes and violins.

When the tilting terminated, and twilight threatened to cause a cessation of the festivities, four thousand immense torches suddenly illuminated the space destined to the banquet; and the tables were served by two hundred attendants, habited as dryads, wood-deities, and fauns; in the midst of whom Pan and Diana approached the august circle on the summit of a moving mountain, whence they descended only to superintend the arrangement of a repast which combined all the luxuries attainable by art or expense. Behind the tables, which formed a vast crescent, an orchestra was suddenly erected as if by magic, and peopled with musicians; the arcades surrounding the banqueting hall and theatre were lighted by five hundred girandoles of green and silver; and a gilt balustrade enclosed the whole of the immense area.

The fêtes lasted seven days; and the prizes prepared for the victors in the lists were most magnificent.[1]

On this occasion the *Princesse d'Elide* of Molière was produced in the presence of the sovereign and the whole court; and was succeeded, on a subsequent day, by the three first acts of the *Tartuffe*, upon which he had been engaged at intervals for several years. He was quite aware of the obstacles which must be overcome before it could appear upon the public stage; and in the hope of obtaining, in the first place, the powerful protection of royal favour, he had urged that he should be permitted to cause its representation at Versailles. He was not, however, fated to see the whole of his hope fulfilled; for he had not adopted the necessary precautions which might have insured the acceptance of ideas at once so bold and so novel as those which he had put forth in the *Tartuffe*. He had neglected to define the delicate shades by which piety and bigotry were to be distinguished; and thus the court, although at that period much less scrupulous than it afterwards became, took offence; and the king, upon the grounds we have stated, forbade a repetition of the performance.

This order was a heavy blow to Molière, but nevertheless, feeling that in the *Tartuffe* he had presented his masterpiece, he would not permit himself altogether to despair; and accordingly, during the next five years, he applied all his energies to its improvement; corrected all that was already written, and completed what was still wanting. For this purpose he made his studies in the varied society of the capital; and became the censor

[1] Siècle de Louis XIV.

rather of the looks and bearing of those about him than of their words. It is scarcely necessary to state that opportunities for such observation were not wanting: the interdict which had been pronounced against his work, had, more than ever, excited interest in its author, and Molière became the fashion.[1]

At the close of 1664, having become convinced of the perfect eligibility of the site which he had chosen, Louis XIV. finally authorized the commencement of the stupendous work which was destined to immortalize his name; and the foundations were laid of the palace of Versailles, fated before its completion to swallow up the enormous sum of one hundred and sixty-five millions, a hundred and thirty-one thousand, four hundred, and ninety-four livres.

But this was by no means the only great undertaking accomplished by the French king at this period. In the solitude of the cabinet he concerted with Colbert most of those splendid measures which tended to illustrate his reign. Under the prompting of this far-sighted and zealous minister, he encouraged men of letters, and founded the manufactories which were destined to render France a great commercial nation. Vessels were launched which suddenly rendered his naval strength respectable; a reinforcement was sent to the Emperor of Austria against the Turks; the Duke de Beaufort was entrusted with the command of the expedition of Gigeri, which was succeeded by that of Cyprus, where he was fated to perish; the Louvre was completed as the walls of Versailles began to rise above the soil; an Indian company was organized; and the manufacture of the

[1] Vie de Molière, par M. Petitot.

Gobelins was purchased in the king's name; while, as regarded external relations, both Spain and Rome, which had ventured to contest his supremacy, were compelled to make reparation to the authority they had failed to recognise.

Nor must mention be omitted of the creation, at the same period, of no less than seventy knights of the Holy Ghost, by Louis XIV; who, as a signal and unprecedented favour, left one nomination at the disposal of the Prince de Condé; and besides this national recompense, originated by Henry III, his descendant also instituted another for personal services, which, however puerile it must appear to posterity, was too characteristic of Louis, and too much sought after by the greatest nobles of the court, to be passed over in silence. This extraordinary distinction, which he retained the right of bestowing and withdrawing at his pleasure, was the privilege of wearing a blue outer coat, embroidered with gold and silver, precisely similar to his own; and was accorded by a patent, authorizing the wearer to accompany the king in his hunting parties and his drives.

From that moment his favourites, more fortunate than his soldiers, had an uniform, by which they might be known; and Condé the Conqueror solicited and obtained the favour of donning this envied habit; not because he had gained half-a-dozen battles for France, but because he had efficiently played the courtier at Fontainebleau.[1] It may be expedient to remark, that these outer coats were worn over vests ornamented with ribbons; and that above the coat was slung a shoulder-belt supporting a sword; while a throat-band of muslin edged

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

with fine lace, and a broad-brimmed beaver, surmounted by a double row of plumes, completed the costume, which continued in vogue until 1684, and became the fashion throughout all Europe, with the exception of Spain and Poland.

Meanwhile the position of Mademoiselle de la Vallière was far from being a happy one; for, superadded to the remorse which she never ceased to feel, she was exposed to perpetual suffering from the intrigues which were set on foot on all sides to separate her from the king; which, combined with the harshness she continually experienced from *Madame*, kept her in a perpetual state of anxiety. Nevertheless, she bore all patiently, and forebore to utter a complaint; conscious, as she herself feelingly declares, that she was only paying the penalty of her faults. She was not, however, long fated to confine her grief to her own bosom; for, on one occasion, when it was her tour of duty about the person of the princess, and that she was preparing to attend her to the funeral service of the Queen of Bohemia, then recently deceased, the Count de St. Aignan entered her apartment, and delivered to her a note from the king; in which he requested her to return home immediately after the ceremony, as he had an affair of importance to communicate.

Naturally anxious to ascertain its nature, Mademoiselle de la Vallière questioned the messenger, who informed her that her enemies had just concerted a new plot, intended to ruin her in the king's affections; and that, on this occasion, they had involved the peace of the young queen, by affecting to serve her in order to accomplish their purpose. He was about to be more explicit when she was summoned to *Madame;* but she

had heard enough to excite her uneasiness to a degree which she found it difficult to conceal. Nor did the expression of the king's countenance during the mass tend to remove her fears: he was pale, and occasionally looked fiercely round him, as though he sought for some one upon whom he could wreak the anger by which he was evidently agitated; while, contrary to his usual rigid attention to the services of the church, he addressed perpetual questions to the Marquis de Vardes, who knelt behind him.

It was, consequently, with increased alarm that la Vallière awaited his advent in her chamber on her return; but one glance convinced her that she at least had not incurred his displeasure; and he at once revealed to her the circumstance by which he was so deeply moved. A letter had been addressed to Maria Theresa, which was delivered to the Señora Molina, her Spanish waiting-woman; who, suspicious that it might contain something calculated to distress her royal mistress, had forthwith carried it to the king. It was written in the Spanish language; but a translation had been appended which enabled the trembling Louise to read as follows:

"The king is involved in an intrigue of which Your Majesty alone is ignorant. Mademoiselle de la Vallière is the object of this unworthy passion. This information is given to Your Majesty by faithful servants. You must decide if you can love your husband in the arms of another; or if you will prevent a circumstance whose duration cannot tend to your honour."

While the unhappy la Vallière, drowned in tears, was endeavouring to conjecture from the hand of what new enemy this bolt had sped, the king himself, whose indignation increased every moment, informed her that it was

a device of Madame de Navailles, and that nothing short of the ruin of herself and her husband would satisfy his vengeance for the affront which had been put upon them both; nor was it without the most earnest entreaties that Mademoiselle de la Vallière could induce him to promise that he would limit their punishment to an immediate exile from the capital.

It may be well to mention in this place, that the unfortunate duke and duchess, who were deprived of their position at court, and banished without a hope of future pardon, were totally guiltless of the letter which had excited the wrath of the king. The Countess de Soissons, hopeless of any change in the affection of Louis towards la Vallière, to whom she bore a mortal hatred, suddenly imagined that could she succeed in acquainting Maria Theresa with the truth of a passion in which she had hitherto resolutely refused to place credence, her Spanish jealousy must inevitably cause a separation between the monarch and his favourite; and in this belief she secured the envelope of a letter which the queen had received from Madrid, and which she had thrown aside.

This done, she proceeded to the apartments of *Madame*, whom she requested to exert her influence in inducing the Count de Guiche to translate into Spanish for her a note of which she had brought a rough sketch in French. The princess, who imagined that nothing more was intended than a jest to mystify some person about the court, immediately sent for de Guiche, and having explained to him the service which Madame de Soissons required at his hands, left them while he accomplished his task. The count had, however, no sooner run his eye over the paper which was placed in his hand, than he

indignantly refused to lend himself to so nefarious a proceeding; nor could all the blandishments of the countess succeed in winning his compliance. The discussion lasted so long that *Madame* returned to the room while it was at its height; and was immediately addressed by Madame de Soissons, who bade her place no further faith in the professions of the Duke de Guiche, as, after vowing himself to her interests, he had refused to further them by participating in a measure which would ensure the dismission of la Vallière from the court.

Suffice it that the arguments of the princess, combined with those of her confidant, at length prevailed over the honour of the Count de Guiche; who affected, in order to serve his own passion for *Madame*, to become gradually convinced that although the means employed were somewhat questionable, the motive was one of pure morality; there was, according to Madame de Soissons, an immoral connexion to terminate, a husband to be restored to his wife, and a queen to be saved from a life of sorrow; in short, a good action to be accomplished without difficulty, and, if carefully conducted, without danger.

While the countess was speaking, *Madame* held in one hand the note which was to be translated, while, with a smile that she knew he would be unable to resist, she pointed to a writing stand beside her, and then motioned to the count to seat himself. He obeyed, but with a compunction which still made him hesitate; until the princess, motioning to Madame de Soissons and the Marquis de Vardes to leave the room, commenced dictating the sentences he was to translate with another sunny smile, which he answered by exclaiming:

"Be it so then, since it is your will; fortunately it

involves my life should it ever be discovered, for nothing save the scaffold will expiate such a crime. But it is your pleasure; and for your sake I am ready to become an anonymous assassin—to lose my self-respect—to write this letter."

Unhappily, the princess, strong in her aversion to Mademoiselle de la Vallière, and confident in the good management of the countess, considered all discovery impossible; and thus the letter was translated with a careful imitation of the writing of the Queen of Spain; and it was no sooner finished than the countess hastened to enclose it in its cover, well aware that if she suffered it to remain in the hands of the Count de Guiche, a return of better feeling would induce him to destroy it. M. de Vardes undertook its transmission to the Louvre through a courier who was about to quit his service; and the count saw it carried away with a pang of remorse, which not even the gracious acknowledgments of *Madame* had power to overcome.

As we have already stated, the letter was delivered to the Señora Molina; who, well acquainted with the autograph of the Queen of Spain, and discovering in the address certain indications of an imperfect attempt at its imitation, immediately conceived the idea that it was some anonymous communication calculated to wound her mistress; and believing that with such a suspicion she ran no risk by confiding in the queen-mother, she immediately carried it to Anne of Austria; who, delighted to have an opportunity of giving this additional proof to her son of the public indignation excited by his attachment for Mademoiselle de la Vallière, desired Molina to deliver the letter to the king.

The waiting-woman seized the opportunity of his

leaving the council-chamber to approach Louis with the open letter in her hand; and to inform him, that by a providential inspiration, fearing it might contain intelligence of the death of the King of Spain, who had long been dangerously indisposed, she had unsealed the packet before giving it to the queen.

Louis unfolded the paper, and the blood rushed to his brow as he perused its contents; and then, after compelling the bearer to pledge her oath that she had not communicated its contents to her royal mistress, he hastened to the apartments of Madame de Soissons, believing that her sagacity would enable her to discover the delinquent. It is needless, however, to state that although the countess was not backward in pointing his suspicions in more than one direction, she afforded him no clue to the actual culprit; and it was reserved to M. de Vardes, when questioned in his turn by the monarch, to centre them upon the unhappy Duchess de Navailles, who paid the penalty of his treachery during three weary years.

Shortly after this event Mademoiselle de la Vallière became the mother of a son, which lived but ten months; and whose existence, from the caution of those about her, was known only to a few persons. Immediately after its birth, the king expressed a wish that while she retained her post at the court of *Madame*, she should cease to fulfil its functions; but to this la Vallière objected, upon the ground that such an arrangement was without precedent, and would only increase the virulence of her enemies; and as Louis was silenced if not convinced by the argument, she was comparatively surprised when, on presenting herself as usual at the toilette of

Madame, Her Royal Highness informed her that thenceforward she would dispense with her official services, which under present circumstances no longer became her; adding that she did so by command of the king.

The extreme harshness with which this favour was accorded, rendered it eminently painful to the erring maid of honour, who was crushed beneath the weight of her conscience; and found her only consolation in the conviction that she was indebted for the scorn and coldness of the princess, rather to the jealousy with which she regarded a rival, than to her horror of the crime she affected to condemn. Nevertheless, this constant recurrence of mortification preyed upon the mind of Mademoiselle de la Vallière; and, combined with her separation from her child, affected both her health and spirits to a degree which not even the augmented tenderness of the king had power to remove.

During the carnival of 1663, the Crown Prince of Denmark, who was making the tour of Europe, arrived in Paris, where he was welcomed with great distinction; and MADEMOISELLE, who had been exiled to her estate of St. Fargeau for having refused to marry the King of Portugal, received constant letters from the court, in which her correspondents expatiated on the fine person of the prince, his exquisite dancing, and the perfection with which he spoke the French language; coupled with assurances that he aspired to her hand; and that having expressed to the king a desire to wait upon her in her exile, His Majesty had readily given his consent to the visit.

MADEMOISELLE was, however, just then in the vein of opposition, and declared her resolution to decline the proffered honour; alleging as an excuse that her house

was not yet in a state which would enable her to receive guests of his quality. Her mood was, moreover, rendered still less complying by the fact that she had endeavoured to temporize with the king, by offering thus tardily to accept the hand of the Duke of Savoy, which had been proposed to her; but Louis rejected the compromise, telling her in a bitter manner that he should marry her as might best serve his own interests; and during her banishment, this very Duke of Savoy, whose gallant bearing and personal advantages had produced their effect even upon her haughty nature, during his apparition at Lyons with the Princess Marguerite, had become the husband of her sister Mademoiselle de Valois; whose reception at the court of Turin had been most brilliant.

It is probable, however, that MADEMOISELLE afterwards repented her abruptness; and finding that the pleasures of the court were preferable to the monotonous occupation of building and furnishing, with which she had endeavoured to beguile her banishment, became anxious to quit her solitude; for she ere long wrote to the king to state that having caused a swamp upon her estate to be drained, the air had become so overcharged with miasma that her health was giving way; and she was shortly afterwards recalled.

Soon after her return to Paris,[1] there was a grand gala at court, on Twelfth-night; when, either by chance or design, the Prince of Denmark drew the bean,[2] and

[1] Jour des Rois.

[2] The ceremony of "drawing characters" in France is different from our own. A single bean is mixed with the ingredients of the cake, and the person in whose portion it is discovered becomes king or queen for the evening, and chooses a consort; and both are afterwards attended by the rest of the company, with all the ceremonial due to their temporary rank.

immediately selected MADEMOISELLE as the companion of his transitory honours; a circumstance which gave evident satisfaction to the king, who had already privately offered the hand of his cousin to the young heir of Denmark; affecting to be urged to this measure by political considerations, but probably anxious to rid himself of the continual annoyances to which he was subjected by her overweening pretensions, and perpetual discontent.

MADEMOISELLE, however, rejected this new prospect of a throne as decidedly as she had refused that by which it had been preceded, even declining to adduce any reason for her decision; and thus again incurred the king's displeasure immediately after her restoration to favour so greatly, that he did not scruple to remark, that he could not in any way account for her conduct, save by the supposition that she still preserved a hope of becoming queen of France, as she refused all the princes who were proposed to her; in which case, he added, that she was only injuring herself, for that should it please God to spare him longer than the queen, it was assuredly not Mademoiselle de Montpensier who would afterwards share his throne.

Were any further proof requisite of the extreme depravity of the French court at that period, it would be supplied by the fact that the king, undeterred by the increasing devotion and piety of his royal mother, who now passed the greater portion of her time in the convent of Val-de-Grace, importuned her to receive Mademoiselle de la Vallière, even at a time when she was scarcely visible to the most attached of her friends; nor could the undisguised repugnance which she evinced to profane the holy retreat where she sought to forget all worldly

passions and worldly animosities, induce the infatuated monarch to withdraw his request.

Deeply attached to Maria Theresa, to whose forbearance and uncomplaining patience she was no stranger, she naturally shrank from all contact with a person by whom she had been so deeply wronged; and the many amiable qualities of the erring woman whom she was required to welcome, in order to assure to her a position in society to which she was entitled neither by her birth nor her conduct, could not blind her to the extent and mischievous nature of her fault. But Louis was resolute; and surely the devoted and deceived Mary de Mancini was revenged, when at length a royal carriage drove into the court-yard of the pious nuns of Val-de-Grâce; and that the son of Anne of Austria ascended the stairs, entered her oratory—that sanctuary which should have been her refuge from the profligacy and vices of a court—and presenting his mistress, said with a calm smile upon his lips: "*Mother*, here is Mademoiselle de la Vallière, whom you have condescended to send for."

The soul-stricken Magdalen, as she looked on the stern brow and cold eye of the coerced and indignant queen, would have knelt; and even when the hand of her royal mistress raised her from the floor to a low stool beside her own seat, she could not, during the brief interview, sufficiently control her feeling of humiliation to remember any portion of the conversation. With the king she could be, and she was to the last, only a loving and devoted woman, who had sacrificed all, even her self-esteem, to a passion too mighty for resistance; but in the presence of his injured and dying mother she forgot her love in her remorse.

The affection of the king for Mademoiselle de la Vallière being now recognised, the cessation of mystery caused an equal cessation of interest on the subject, save as regarded those who were affected by its existence; but it was far otherwise with the passion of the Count de Guiche for *Madame*; and accordingly, after the birth of her daughter, Maria Louisa d'Orleans, it once more became a general topic of conversation at court; and so extremely displeased the monarch, that he desired the Marquis de Vardes to inform him of all he knew on the subject.

De Vardes, who feared that the imprudence of the count would, ere long, betray his secret, and who was, consequently, anxious to remove him from the court while there was yet time, did not affect to deny the truth, although he endeavoured to palliate his fault; but the anger of the king, who lost sight of his own errors while condemning those of others, was so vehement, that the marquis endeavoured to calm him by applauding his expressed determination to separate de Guiche from the object of his passion; only suggesting that the interest of both *Monsieur* and *Madame* exacted that his dismissal should not carry with it the appearance of disgrace; and hinting that it would be politic to give to the imprudent courtier the command of the troops at Nancy, which would impart to his exile the air of a signal favour.

Louis XIV, delighted by a measure which would at the same time terminate the romantic attachment of the count, and gratify his father the Marshal de Grammont, instantly acted upon this advice; and de Guiche departed for Lorraine with despair in his heart, after having been compelled to receive the congratulations of half the court.

CHAPTER XVI.

DEATHS OF THE DUKE DE LONGUEVILLE AND THE MARSHAL DE LA MEILLERAIE—INCREASING DANGER OF THE QUEEN-MOTHER—ILLNESS OF THE KING AND QUEEN—THE KING AT ST. CLOUD—ARRIVAL OF THE POPE'S LEGATE—HIS RECEPTION—DIPLOMACY OF LOUIS XIV.—THE LEGATE AND THE DRAMATIST—CONDESCENSION OF LOUIS XIV. TO MOLIÈRE—SUBMISSION OF THE DUKE DE LORRAINE—JEALOUSY OF THE COUNT DE GUICHE—IMPETUOSITY OF MADAME—THE COUNTESS DE GUICHE—THE KING AT NANCY—THE EXTORTED CONFESSION—THE COUNT DE GUICHE DEPARTS FOR POLAND—HIS GALLANTRY—THE MINIATURE—THE KING RECALS M. DE GUICHE—DISPLEASURE OF MONSIEUR—THE CHEVALIER DE LORRAINE—INSOLENCE OF M. DE VARDES—INDIGNATION OF M. DE GUICHE—THE CHALLENGE—MADAME BETRAYS THE COUNTESS DE SOISSONS—THE CONSPIRACY REVEALED—BANISHMENT OF MADAME DE SOISSONS—IMPRISONMENT OF M. DE VARDES—M. DE GUICHE IS SENT TO HOLLAND—THE DUKE DE MAZARIN AND ST. GENEVIEVE—THE VISIONS OF LOUIS XIV.

About this time intelligence reached the capital of the death of the Duke de Longueville, at his government of Normandy; and of another actor in the Fronde in the person of the Marshal de la Meilleraie, whose son had become Duke de Mazarin by his marriage with Hortensia de Mancini; but what was still more calculated to shed a veil of mourning over the festivities which had hitherto succeeded each other in rapid succession, was the fact that the illness of the queen-mother increased so rapidly as to excite the fears of all around her.

Anne of Austria had enjoyed the rare privilege, so seldom accorded to her sex, of growing old without in any very eminent degree losing her personal advan-

tages. Her hands and arms, which had always been singularly beautiful, remained smooth and round, and delicately white; not a wrinkle marred the dignity of her noble forehead; and her eyes, which were remarkably fine, lost neither their brightness nor their expression; and yet for years she had been suffering physical pangs, only the more poignant from the resolution with which she concealed them. Compelled at last to confide in the faculty, she had in vain applied in succession every remedy which had been suggested to her; and at length the disease made such inroad upon her constitution that her strength began visibly to give way. The summer sojourn of the king at Versailles in 1664 was consequently abandoned; while the young queen was so painfully affected by the state of her royal mother-in-law, to whom she was tenderly attached, that her health gave way beneath the shock, and she was so violently attacked by measles, that her life was endangered.

On this occasion all the better feelings of the king were awakened; and regardless of the expostulations of those about him, he could not be induced to leave her bedside, where he remained day and night till he became infected with the complaint, and for the first four days was not expected to survive. On the fifth, however, the disease weakened, and he was removed to St. Cloud, where *Madame* was then residing; and where he was consequently under the same roof with Mademoiselle de la Vallière.

During his sojourn in that palace, the *Legate à latere* arrived to make the *amende honorable*, which had been demanded by Louis XIV, for the insult offered to his ambassador at Rome; and was received by the king in his

bed-chamber, within the balustrade; where as a signal honour he was permitted to seat himself.[1] All the principal nobles of the court were present; and heard with natural exultation, from the document read by the cardinal, that the pope, recognising the justice of the displeasure of the French monarch, consented to disband the Corsican guard, and to raise within the walls of Rome a pyramid commemorative of the insult and its reparation.

The Cardinal Chigi was the first legate ever despatched by the Roman court to sue for the pardon of an European sovereign; their province had hitherto invariably been to give laws, and to impose tithes; but on this occasion, Louis XIV, not satisfied by so temporary a manifestation of repentance on the part of His Holiness, as the disbanding of a regiment of guards, and the erection of a monument which might readily be removed, or which must in any event disappear in the lapse of time, insisted on the restoration of Castro and Conciglione to the Duke of Parma; and that the Duke de Modina should receive a compensation for his claims on Comachio; thus making an insult to his ambassador subservient to investing himself with the solid advantage of standing forth as the protector of the Italian princes.[2]

The treaty of reconciliation was no sooner concluded than Louis XIV. gave a series of *fêtes*, in honour, as he publicly asserted, of his distinguished guest, but which he privately dedicated to la Vallière: races at the ring, concerts on the water, balls and banquets, succeeded each other with a rapidity and splendour which dazzled and delighted the Roman envoy; while on his side, that

[1] Versailles Ancien et Moderne.

[2] Le Siècle de Louis XIV.

dignitary rendered himself extremely popular with the whole court; an effect the more easily produced from the fact of his being a handsome man, not more than thirty years of age, tall in stature, with finely-arched black eyebrows, hands which became the envy of half the ladies of the royal circle, and an air of dignified suavity that savoured more of the courtier than the churchman.

Notwithstanding the pleasure which he evidently derived from the amusements into which he so readily entered, his hosts were nevertheless somewhat startled on witnessing the relish with which he assisted at the performance of the *Princesse d'Elide;* and still more so by his request, on its conclusion, that the author might be presented to him; when the Prince de Conti lost no time in introducing Molière, who was overwhelmed with praise by the legate, and with assurances that he had never seen any farce by which he had been so much diverted.

The admiration of the cardinal was very gratifying to Louis XIV, who regarded the great dramatist as one of the most distinguished men in his kingdom; and who had, on perceiving Molière, (who in his official capacity of court upholsterer was, in conjunction with his colleague Delobel, engaged in arranging the tapestries of the orchestra,) on an occasion when he was about to take his frugal breakfast of bread and weak wine and water, desired his attendants to bring forward a folding stool, and made the dramatist take a seat by his side; in order to impress upon those about him, who affected to despise the plebeian genius, the estimation in which he was held by their monarch.

The greater portion of the summer of 1663 had been passed amid these perpetual festivities, when in the month

of August, France was again threatened with a war which was, however, averted by the weakness of her adversary. It may be remembered that the Duke de Lorraine had signed a treaty by which he bequeathed his principality to France after his death, on condition that the king would allow him to raise a million of revenue during his life; and that the princes of the blood of Lorraine should be recognised as princes of the blood of France; while, on his side, Louis XIV. had exacted that one of the frontier fortresses of the principality should be forthwith surrendered to the French. The unfortunate Charles IV, a brave soldier, but a feeble, vacillating, and imprudent prince, although he had authorized the verification of this treaty by the parliament, after a thousand subterfuges and delays had at length refused to fulfil his compact; and it was decided that he should at once be compelled to do so.

Meanwhile, the Count de Guiche,—whose honourable exile was embittered by constant letters from the Marquis de Vardes; who during his absence, was endeavouring to supplant his friend in the affections of the Duchess d'Orleans, whose smiles were also sought by the Prince de Marsillac and the Chevalier de Lorraine, to both of whom she was utterly indifferent; and who, in order to conceal his own turpitude, hinted at her marked preference of the prince,—became highly incensed, and wrote reproachfully to *Madame*, who in her indignation complained to M. de Vardes of the presumption of her old favourite.

This was precisely the point at which the marquis had aimed; and far from endeavouring to defend his friend, he immediately seized the opportunity of alarming the fears of the princess, by representing the danger to which

she was exposed from the jealousy of the count, and the necessity there existed for the restoration of her letters; which, however inconsequent they might really be, would, in the event of their becoming suspected, be assuredly misinterpreted, and thus injure both parties. In the first burst of her displeasure *Madame* acted upon this insidious advice; and de Guiche, revolted by a want of confidence which impugned his honour, did not attempt to remonstrate, but at once confided to the marquis the casket which contained the correspondence.

This was no sooner in the possession of the princess, than she repented her precipitancy, for she felt the wound which her implied suspicion must have inflicted upon a high-minded man, whose only error had been his headlong and uncalculating passion for herself; but it was too late to regret the step when she held in her hands the letters she had reclaimed, and learnt that the Count de Guiche had fallen dangerously ill at Nancy.

The latter intelligence had no sooner reached the Countess de Guiche than she resolved to join her husband, in order to solace his sickness by her attentions; and the heart-stricken invalid could not remain insensible to such a sacrifice, although he had never affected any attachment towards a wife who had been forced upon him by his family.[1] He consequently exerted himself to render her sojourn with the army less monotonous than she must have been prepared to find it; and all Paris ere long learnt that the countess was surrounded by gaiety, and the object of her husband's unceasing devotion.

No one experienced more gratification from this intelligence than the king, who had lately purchased Dunkirk

[1] Mademoiselle de Béthune, Countess de Guiche, was the daughter of the Duke de Sully, and granddaughter of the Chancellor Seguier.

from the English, and was preparing to seize Marsal from the Duke de Lorraine; and in his satisfaction at so happy a change in his old playfellow, he caused it to be announced to him that he was about to arrive in person at Nancy to superintend the siege, accompanied by *Monsieur*. The count was careful to profit by so admirable an opportunity of recovering the good graces of the monarch; and aware of his taste for display and ceremony, he accordingly lost no time in preparing for him a triumphal entry into the city; which so much gratified Louis that no shade of displeasure remained towards M. de Guiche, who suddenly found himself once more on the very pinnacle of court favour.

Notwithstanding this extreme graciousness, however, the king retained considerable curiosity to learn all the details of the intimacy which had existed between *Madame* and his host; and in order to accomplish this, he affected in their private interviews to know far more than he was in reality aware of, and mentioned the secret meetings of the count and the princess as matters with which he was so well acquainted that it was needless for de Guiche to deny them.

Duped by this apparent candour; and glad, in all probability, to be enabled to convince his royal master of his frankness without betraying the confidence which had been reposed in him by the princess, the count related every circumstance which had occurred, insisting throughout that nothing had taken place which could in any way affect the honour of Her Royal Highness. Had Louis XIV. been discreet, no evil consequences could have arisen from this revelation, even extorted as it was by the subtle inferences of the king himself; but, unfortunately, it afforded so favourable an opportunity of

intimidating *Madame*, that he was unable to deny himself the gratification of informing her that he was master of her secret; and she was the more enraged by the discovery, from the fact that, after the departure of Louis for Lorraine, she had written to M. de Guiche to warn him, if he valued her friendship, not to suffer the king to prevail on him to make the slightest disclosures.

Before her letter arrived at Nancy, however, there remained no more to tell; and on the return of the monarch to Paris, he had no sooner proved that he was aware of all the detail of the intrigue, than she addressed a letter to the count, in which she commanded him never to appear in her presence, or to utter her name, under pain of her lasting hatred. In vain did he write, again and again, explaining all the circumstances under which he had been betrayed; his letters were returned unanswered; and at length, despairing that he should ever be able to justify himself in her eyes, he requested permission of the king to serve in the Polish army; a measure to which Louis was at first opposed, but which he ultimately conceded, on learning how much he had himself been instrumental in its adoption.

The taking of Marsal, where he had fought bravely, permitting M. de Guiche to resign with honour the command which he held in Lorraine, he accordingly embarked for Dantzic, careless of the fate which might await him. The monarch was, however, sufficiently generous to reassure *Madame* after his departure, on the nature of the confidence which he had extorted from the self-exiled count; and when she learnt that, far from having boasted of her favour, he had convinced the king that her sole error had been that of permitting him to

love her, the princess thought only of the means of recompensing him for all the suffering which he had undergone on her account; and ere long she despatched her miniature by a trusty messenger, who transmitted it to the count in Poland; where a short time afterwards it saved his life in battle. a ball having struck the case in which it was contained suspended by a chain about his neck.[1]

The continued victories of the King of Poland began, however, after a time, to make Louis regret the assent which he had given to the request of the Count de Guiche to serve in his army; and the annoyance that he felt whenever he encountered the name of one of his best officers in the despatches which reached him filled with details of the engagements gained over the Muscovites, despite all the glory which accrued to the name of France from the gallantry of the count, induced him to determine on his return; and he accordingly desired the Marshal de Grammont to recal him, in his name. The letter of the marshal reached M. de Guiche on his return from Varsovie, while John-Casimir was arranging a peace with the insürgents of the Ukraine, and an armistice with the Turks; and scarcely allowing himself time to take leave of the king, and to communicate to him the order which he had received from his own sovereign to return home, he commenced his journey the same night, and arrived in Paris exhausted with fatigue, and wild with joy.

Monsieur, when he first saw him in the circle of the king, bowed gravely without uttering a syllable of wel-

[1] Histoire de Madame Henriette d'Angleterre, par la Comtesse de la Fayette.

come; *Madame* affected an indifference which she was far from feeling; and the Marquis de Vardes, conscious that by his treachery he must have converted a friend into an enemy, met him with an elaborate politeness which was as elaborately returned.

The position of each party was embarrassing, but it soon became more so; for the Chevalier de Lorraine, piqued by the coldness of the princess, affected extreme devotion to several ladies of the court; and his universal homage created such amusement, that he was tormented by all his friends to confess who was the real object of his preference. Thus urged he mentioned Mademoiselle de Fiennes, one of the maids of honour of *Madame;* when the Marquis de Vardes, who was present, and who had his own subject of annoyance, asked him superciliously why he did not rather address his vows to her mistress.

The Count de Guiche overheard the inquiry; but from respect to the queen, in whose circle the conversation had taken place, he made no rejoinder until the next morning, when he sent a challenge to de Vardes. The king was, however, immediately informed of the circumstance, and forbade the meeting; while *Madame,* to whom it had also been confided, hastened to complain of the indignity to His Majesty, who sent the marquis to the Bastille. In her anger the princess did not spare the Countess de Soissons, to whose influence she attributed the insult; and among other remarks which she addressed to the king, she said that she was not surprised to find herself the victim of the superintendent's malice, when those who were most dear to His Majesty could not escape; and upon an inquiry of her meaning, she informed him that on one occasion, when Madame de la Vallière had taken

precedence of the wife of a president, the countess had remarked to the Duchess de Ventadour, that she was aware that la Vallière was lame, but she never before knew that she was blind.

The anger of the king was unbounded, and he immediately ordered that the Countess de Soissons should be banished from the court; while the astonishment and fury of the superintendent were beyond bounds when the order was conveyed to her. She uttered invectives against the sovereign, who had, she said, sacrificed her to a nobody; against the two queens who ought to intercede for her; but especially against *Madame*, upon whom she declared that she would soon have ample revenge. She kept her word, but in a manner which, although it was eminently mortifying to the princess, proved far more fatal to herself; for it was possible that the king would after a time have forgiven her offence, had she not, in her weak desire for revenge, after accusing alike friends and enemies of crimes which in all probability were the offspring of her own malice, ended by relating to Louis the whole history of the Spanish letter, although in a manner which exculpated both herself and M. de Vardes; and cast all the stigma upon *Madame* and the Count de Guiche.

The king, more and more exasperated by what he heard, instantly summoned the princess; who, on being confronted with the Countess de Soissons, related the whole plot even to its minutest details, and so thoroughly laid it open that Louis became convinced of her sincerity; and on ascertaining that the original draft of the letter was in the handwriting of M. de Vardes, ordered his immediate transfer to the fortress of Pignerolle; declaring to Madame de Soissons, that if he

could conceive any punishment more heavy than that which he had inflicted on herself he would condemn her to its endurance.

Madame, who felt that neither herself nor the Count de Guiche had been quite blameless in the affair, obtained a promise that her accomplice should not be in any way subjected to the royal displeasure; but on the intelligence of M. de Vardes' arrest, the Marshal de Grammont became alarmed, and sent his son to Holland, although he was at the time labouring under a severe indisposition.

This event divided the whole court into two distinct parties. The queen-mother headed that of the superintendent; but her interest was powerless against the will of the king. Maria Theresa refused to interfere in any way; while *Monsieur* could not conceal his delight at this third exile of the Count de Guiche. With the exception of a few of the younger nobility, who missed the brilliant saloon of Madame de Soissons, and the immediate friends of Anne of Austria, who, as a matter of course, regulated their feelings by hers, little regret was, however, really experienced at the banishment of the haughty and sarcastic countess; the greatest commiseration was bestowed upon M. de Vardes, who was, nevertheless, the greatest culprit of all, but no one dared openly to espouse his cause; and in a court constituted like that which we are endeavouring to describe, he was ere long forgotten. The Duke de Mazarin was the only individual who ventured to lift up his voice against the sentence of the king; for although he had no great affection for his sister-in-law, the eccentricity of his character always induced him to act differently from

those about him, and in this instance it prompted a proceeding so extraordinary, that it became the subject of universal comment.

Having waited upon the monarch at his *lever*, he approached him with an air of profound mystery, and said solemnly; "Sire, St. Geneviève appeared to me last night. She is much offended by the conduct of Your Majesty, and has foretold to me that if you do not reform your morals, the greatest misfortunes will fall upon your kingdom."

The whole circle stood aghast: but the king, without exhibiting the slightest emotion, replied slowly and steruly; "And I, Monsieur de Mazarin, have recently had several visions, by which I have been warned, that the late cardinal, your uncle, plundered my people; and that it is time to make his heirs disgorge the booty. Remember this; and be persuaded that the very next time you permit yourself to offer to me unsolicited advice, I shall act upon the mysterious information I have received."

The duke attempted no reply, and shortly afterwards left the apartment; much disappointed at the ill success of his stratagem.[1]

[1] Mémoires de Madame de la Vallière.

CHAPTER XVII.

DECLINE OF ANNE OF AUSTRIA—RECOVERY OF THE YOUNG QUEEN—A COURTIER'S COMPLIMENT—SUSCEPTIBILITY OF THE QUEEN-MOTHER—DEATH OF PHILIP IV. OF SPAIN—PROJECTS OF LOUIS XIV.—SUFFERINGS OF ANNE OF AUSTRIA—RENEWED FESTIVITIES AT COURT—THE ROYAL DEATH-BED—ILL-TIMED ETIQUETTE—THE HOLY OILS—DEATH OF ANNE OF AUSTRIA—CONDESCENSION OF MADEMOISELLE—THE ARCHBISHOP AND THE QUEEN'S HEART—THE ROYAL FUNERAL AT ST. DENIS—BIRTH OF MADEMOISELLE DE BLOIS—LA VALLIÈRE CREATED A DUCHESS—LEGITIMIZATION OF LA VALLIÈRE'S CHILDREN—BIRTH OF LOUIS DE BOURBON—MADAME COLBERT GOVERNESS TO MADEMOISELLE DE BLOIS AND THE COUNT DE VERMANDOIS—RECONCILIATION OF LA VALLIÈRE WITH HER MOTHER—DISTASTE OF LOUIS XIV. FOR MADAME DE ST. RÉMY—DECLINE OF THE KING'S PASSION FOR LA VALLIÈRE—A NEW FAVOURITE.

MEANWHILE the queen-mother rapidly declined; and the regular faculty having failed to stay the progress of the evil, she placed herself in the hands of empirics, by whom it was aggravated; while Maria Theresa gradually recovered her health, and was enabled once more to devote all her care and attention to her suffering relative. Vallot, the king's physician, and Seguin, who was the

medical attendant of Anne of Austria, could not agree upon the system to be pursued; and while the invalid was in suspense as to their final decision, the insidious disease made rapid way. On the 15th of December, after a restless night at the convent of Val-de-Grâce, of which she had for several years been a frequent inmate, she felt convinced that, beyond all doubt, the evil had become incurable; and although, during the last twelve or fifteen years, she had seen many cases of the same kind among the nuns, by which she had been so terrified as to make it her daily prayer to God that she might be spared so bitter a trial as theirs, she nevertheless no sooner ascertained the nature of her affliction, than she summoned all her fortitude to support it; and frequently expressed a trust that she should be enabled by means of her physical sufferings to expiate her sins.

Ere long she was perfectly aware of her danger; but even had she sought to deceive herself as to its extent, the want of caution observed by those who approached her, would have rendered such a delusion impossible. As an example of this extraordinary and ill-timed frankness, on one occasion, when she had suffered more than usual, and was greatly exhausted, her immediate end being anticipated, M. de Beringhen, the first valet de chambre, who was one of the oldest and most faithful of her attendants, was admitted to her bedside, and on seeing him she exclaimed: "Ah! monsieur, we must part!" To which the court-servitor coolly replied: "Madam, you will readily understand with what grief your servants receive such an assurance; but it must be a consolation to them as well as to yourself to feel, that by dying at once, Your Majesty will escape great torment, and great incon-

venience; inasmuch as the disease under which you labour becomes after a time very noisome."[1]

The afflicted queen made no reply, but turned upon the pillow as if to avoid all further sight of so awkward a consoler; and the congratulation which he had attempted to couple with his condolence was the more inconsiderate, as the unfortunate queen, despite the prediction of her medical attendants, was still fated to linger several months before she was released from her bitter trial.

The sufferings of the unhappy Anne of Austria must indeed have been extreme, when, superadded to the physical agony of which she was so long the victim, her peculiar fastidiousness of scent and touch are remembered. Throughout the whole of her illness she had adopted every measure to conceal even from herself the effects of her infirmity; she constantly held in her hand a large fan of Spanish leather, and saturated her linen with the most powerful perfumes; while her sense of contact was so acute, and so irritable, that it was with the utmost difficulty cambric could be procured sufficiently fine for her use; and upon one occasion, when Cardinal Mazarin was jesting with her upon this defect, he told her that "if she were damned, her eternal punishment would be sleeping in linen sheets."[2]

Immediately that the danger of the queen-mother became imminent, *Monsieur* hastened to her bedside; and it was only some hours afterwards that she was visited by the king; who did not suffer private feeling to interfere with public business, even in the case of a dying

[1] Anne of Austria died of cancer.

[2] Louis XIV, sa Cour, et le Regent.

parent; and whose tardy visit might have been indefinitely postponed, could he have foreseen that the agony upon which he compelled himself for a short time to look, was incident only upon a crisis of the complaint; for partial convalescence enabled the unhappy sufferer to support the melancholy tidings which soon afterwards reached her of the death of her brother Philip IV. of Spain.

This intelligence produced very different effects upon the different members of the royal family. The young queen was overwhelmed with grief, and mourned for her father with unaffected sorrow. Anne of Austria shed but few tears, for she felt that she should soon join him in the tomb; while Louis XIV. looked upon the event as a sovereign rather than a kinsman, and saw at once the benefit which might accrue to himself from the event; and it is probable that from that very moment he meditated the succession to the Spanish crown.

Philip IV. had become by his first wife, (the sister of Louis XIII,) the father of the Princess Maria Theresa, now married to her cousin Louis XIV; a marriage by which the Spanish monarchy had at length fallen into the house of Bourbon, so long its enemy. By his second marriage with Mary-Anne of Austria he had issue, Charles II, the heir to the throne; a weak and sickly child, and sole survivor of three sons; two of whom had died in their infancy. It is true that, at the period of his alliance with Maria Theresa, the French king had in his marriage-treaty agreed to resign every claim to all and any of the kingdom of Spain; but he instantly remembered that on the other hand that treaty had been already violated, inasmuch as the five hundred thousand crowns which were the dowry of his wife had never been paid; nor did he

care to call to mind that the dowry of the daughter of Henry IV. had also been merely nominal; and, under these circumstances, he decided that Flanders and Franche-Comté must, according to the jurisprudence of those provinces, return to his wife, notwithstanding her renunciation. He, accordingly, caused his right to be investigated by his own council, who declared it to be incontestible; but the council and the confessor of the widow of Philip IV. decided precisely the reverse; and the Spanish queen had in her favour one powerful argument in the law laid down by Charles V, had the laws of Charles V. been acknowledged by the French court.[1]

Meanwhile the queen-mother was lingering on, a prey to the greatest physical agony; and had become so much exhausted by her long-continued suffering, as to faint when she was removed from one bed to another; but when the winter brought its habitual train of festivities, as she still survived, the court gradually resumed its accustomed habits; for she had been so long an invalid that those about her had become inured to the sight of her suffering.

On the 5th of January *Monsieur* gave a ball, at which the king appeared in a suit of violet-coloured velvet, as mourning for his royal father-in-law; so covered, however, with pearls and diamonds that the colour of the material could not be distinguished; and on the following day the unfortunate Anne of Austria became so much worse, that a stop was put to all amusements. Her illness increased during the night; and although in the morning she slept for an hour or two, the disease made such rapid progress that it was evident her end was fast approaching; and she accordingly began to prepare for

[1] Le Siècle de Louis XIV. *Francheville.*

death; and received with great and Christian fortitude the assurance of her physician that she had only a few hours to live. She then asked for her confessor, and requested every one to retire, declaring that she wanted nothing, and could think only of God.

The king, the queen, *Monsieur*, *Madame*, and MADEMOISELLE, accordingly passed into her cabinet, while an express was despatched for the sacrament; and when there, says the latter with supreme self-possession, "in order not to remain useless, we settled the ceremonials of the mourning, and spoke of other matters which required arrangement; and the division of the apartments at St. Germain; determining that the king should leave for Versailles the moment that she should be no more; that *Monsieur* should go to St. Cloud; and that I should remain to order what was necessary. The king himself commanded the carriages."[1]

When the approach of the Archbishop of Auch, attended by the other almoners, with the Holy Viaticum was announced, a discussion arose amongst the illustrious party in the cabinet with regard to the ceremonial which should be observed, and an appeal was made to Madame de Motteville; who replied that, in the case of the late king, the princes had advanced as far as the outer door of the palace to receive the procession, and that she thought it would be wise to act upon that precedent.

MADEMOISELLE, however, objected with considerable haughtiness to so extreme a measure, declaring that she could not consent to establish any custom of the kind; and that as it was her privilege to walk first, she should

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

not advance beyond the middle of the court of the Louvre, which she considered quite sufficient for the holy pyx, as no more could be done for the sacrament itself. Her decision was admitted; and the royal party consequently proceeded no further than the distance she had named.[1]

When about to receive the extreme unction, as the priests were preparing to anoint her ears with the holy oils, the dying queen desired Madame de Flex, her lady of honour, to be careful to raise the borders of her cap, lest the oil should touch them, and give them an unpleasant smell; and the ceremony was no sooner at an end than the king fainted, and was carried into an adjoining apartment, where he was with difficulty restored to consciousness. Finally, at six o'clock on the following morning she expired, and Madame de Flex carried her keys to the king; her will was then brought from the cabinet, and read before the whole of the royal family save *Monsieur*, who refused to remain; and M. le Tellier had no sooner completed the reading, than the king got into his carriage, and departed.[2]

When the funeral-equipage arrived which was to convey the heart of the deceased queen to the convent of Val-de-Grâce, to which she had bequeathed it, MADEMOISELLE in a mourning cloak, attended by Madame de Longueville and the Princess de Carignan, met the Archbishop of Auch at the foot of the grand staircase, and desired him to deposit the heart in the seat of honour, and to place himself beside it; declaring that on this occasion she would yield to him the privilege of her

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Montespan.

[2] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

rank; and upon some hesitation on the part of the prelate she added, with more frankness than civility,—"I shall prefer placing myself on the back seat, on account of the disease of which she died."

This reasoning was unanswerable; and the archbishop accordingly shared the cushion which bore the senseless relic of the once powerful queen-regent of France.[1]

On the following evening,[2] at seven o'clock, the body of the queen-mother left the Louvre; and arrived at St. Denis at eleven, where the mourners were detained an hour and a half in the church, listening to the harangue pronounced by the Archbishop of Auch at the portal on delivering up the body, and the reply of the prior; after which the funeral obsequies were performed, and only brought to a conclusion at two o'clock in the morning; a similar service having taken place simultaneously at Notre Dame; and this ceremony over, the court returned to Paris.

In the following October Mademoiselle de la Vallière became the mother of a daughter;[3] and about six months subsequent to that event, despite her earnest solicitations that he would permit her to remain in her partial obscurity, Louis XIV. formally conferred upon his mistress the estate of Vaujours and the barony of St. Christophe, which he had caused to be erected into a duchy-peerage; and legitimized her child, by an act passed at St. Germain-en-Laye at the commencement of May 1667, and registered by the parliament in the same month.

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Montespan.

[2] 21st January, 1666.

[3] Anna Maria of Bourbon, afterwards legitimized, who married, in 1680, Louis Armand de Bourbon, Prince de Conti.

On the second of December in the following year Mademoiselle (or, as she was now called, Madame) de la Vallière gave birth to a second son; who was legitimized, like his sister, under the name of Louis de Bourbon; and was afterwards known as the Count de Vermandois.

Thenceforward all privacy was impossible. M. Colbert, who owed everything to the king, entrusted the education of the (now) royal children to his wife, by whom they were brought up under his own eye. The elder, who took the name of Mademoiselle de Blois, was of surpassing beauty; and the gradual decrease of the king's passion for their mother never for an instant induced any diminution of tenderness towards her children, whom he idolized.

At this period the Marquise de St. Rémy, upon the representations of the Dowager Duchess d'Orleans, consented to see her daughter, whose lapse from virtue she had hitherto resented so much, as to have altogether withdrawn her countenance from her in consequence; but she did so with a coldness that convinced her erring child she had obeyed the wishes of her royal mistress rather than the impulse of her own will; and the king never forgave her this demonstration of her feelings. In vain did la Vallière endeavour to make him comprehend, that to a parent the reputation of her daughter must be dearer than any thing on earth; Louis XIV, strong in his egotism, would not understand that his love could be otherwise than an honour to all who might become involved in its effects; and thus he was with difficulty induced to tolerate the marchioness, and never evinced towards her a single mark of favour.

This fact alone might have convinced the unhappy duchess that her power over the affections of her royal lover was actually, even if not ostensibly diminishing. Some months previously he would have listened to her arguments and yielded to her reasons; but now, although she had acquired as a mother a more feasible claim upon his heart, she had begun to fade beneath anxiety and care; and as her bloom had been her greatest attraction, she was no longer so well able to compete with the younger and happier beauties by whom she was surrounded; nor was so supreme an egotist as Louis XIV. likely to remain long blind to such a fact; while it is certain, that one of the handsomest women of the court not only perceived, but resolved to profit by the change.

Would that we could present a faithful picture of the reign of Louis XIV, without finding ourselves perpetually compelled to sully our pages by a record of heartless intrigues, which are so intimately involved with the history of the time as to enforce even detailed mention. To Mary de Mancini Louis XIV. was indebted for his first intellectual ambition; Mademoiselle de la Vallière had taught him the real value of a devoted heart; and Madame de Montespan was about to impart to him the still more important secret of self-government.

When Louis succeeded in overcoming the resistance of la Vallière, he was still young, and loved with a respectful and timid passion, which, constituted as he was, he afterwards exchanged towards his mistresses for the same arrogant and disdainful domination that he exhibited towards his subjects; and which a modest submission like that of the unfortunate favourite whom we have seen the heroine of the fêtes of Versailles and

St. Cloud, only tended to augment. He required, in order to contend with and overcome his self-love, a character as haughty and as imperious as his own; and he found what he needed, in the beautiful, intellectual, but unprincipled and self-centred Marquise de Montespan.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MADEMOISELLE DE TONNAY-CHARENTE—LADY OF THE PALACE—HER SUPERB BEAUTY —"THE WIT OF THE MORTEMARS"—HER SUBTLETY—HUMILITY OF LA VALLIÈRE—AMBITION OF HER RIVAL—MARRIAGE OF MADEMOISELLE DE TONNAY-CHARENTE—THE MARQUIS DE MONTESPAN—HORROR OF THE MARQUIS AT THE POSITION OF LA VALLIÈRE—MADAME DE MONTESPAN REFUSES TO LEAVE THE COURT—DEPARTURE OF THE MARQUIS—HIS LETTERS—PREPARATION FOR WAR—SALE OF DUNKIRK BY CHARLES II.—LOUIS FORTIFIES THE CITY—ALLIANCE WITH PORTUGAL AND THE UNITED PROVINCES—ADMIRABLE CONDITION OF THE ARMY—THE SPANISH MINISTER—HIS ARROGANCE—HIS WEAKNESS—A COURTLY CAMPAIGN—A LUXURIOUS CAMP—TRIUMPHANT PROGRESS OF LOUIS XIV.—THE KING IN THE TRENCHES—THE VETERAN'S WARNING—GRATITUDE OF LOUIS XIV.—THE COUSIN OF M. DE CHAROST—ALARM OF THE CITIZENS OF BRUSSELS—INCREASING FAVOUR OF MADAME DE MONTESPAN—LA VALLIÈRE INSULTED BY THE QUEEN—DEPARTURE OF LA VALLIÈRE FOR PARIS—HER RETURN—HER IMPRUDENCE—VERBAL MORALITY OF MADAME DE MONTESPAN—MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN LOUIS AND MARIA THERESA—THE WOUNDED ARM—LA VALLIÈRE IN THE QUEEN'S COACH—THE MONTESPAN CORRESPONDENCE—THE PUBLIC MOURNING—ACCOMMODATING PRINCIPLES.

FRANCES Athenaïs de Rochechouart de Mortemar,[1] whom we have already introduced to our readers as one of the companions of la Vallière, when, in the park of Fontainebleau, she betrayed her secret passion for the king; and who was at that time Mademoiselle de Tonnay-Charente, had obtained through the interest of the Duchess de

[1] "The antiquity of the family of Mortemar is registered in its name, since the genealogists affirm that a noble who accompanied Godfrey de Bouillon in his crusade, obtained, as his share of the conquest, that portion of Syria bordering upon the Dead Sea, (*Mermorte.*) Thence the name of *Mortimer* in England, and of *Mortemar* in France."—*Louis XIV, et son Siècle.*

Navailles an appointment as lady of the palace to the infanta-queen; and by her superb beauty and brilliant wit soon attracted the attention of the whole court; but this homage, flattering as it was, did not suffice to the ambition of Mademoiselle de Tonnay-Charente, so long as the king continued insensible to her attractions; and as he was constantly absorbed by her old companion la Vallière, she could devise no better method of directing his attention to herself than by exhibiting an extraordinary affection for the favourite. She saw at a glance that the timid, tranquil, and unobtrusive affection of la Vallière was unaccompanied by any mental exertion; and that, satisfied with the mere fact of looking at and listening to the king, she was incapable of amusing him in a moment of tedium, or of assisting him in a season of difficulty. Resolute in her determination never to be involved in any political cabal, to solicit favours either for herself or others, or to parade the triumph of her fault by making herself conspicuous in the court circle, she was ignorant of all the graceful gossip in which Louis, in his private hours, delighted to indulge. Absorbed in her affection for her royal lover and his children, she was careless of literature, and ignorant of art. In short, she lived in her own little world of devotion and remorse; and often met the monarch with tears which banished the smile from his lips, and chilled the ardour of his greeting.

Athenaïs de Mortemar felt her advantage, and profited by it to the utmost; and this constant contact ere long produced its effect. The king was struck by the affectionate devotion which she exhibited to her friend; the amiable zeal with which she superintended even the

details of her toilette; and the ready wit with which she furnished her at every crisis with both words and ideas. His visits to la Vallière became more agreeable when he found that the high spirits of the handsome lady of the palace relieved him from the annoyance of a repentance which wounded his self-love, by imparting a portion of their buoyancy to his gentle mistress; and the "wit of the Mortemars," which had passed into a proverb not likely to be negatived in the person of Mademoiselle de Tonnay-Charente, proved an agreeable episode in his communion with his acknowledged favourite, for which he felt by no means disposed to be ungrateful.

Thus were things situated when the subtle beauty was compelled by her family to accept the hand of the Marquis de Montespan;[1] having, as she herself acknowledged, already bestowed her affections elsewhere.

During the first months of their union, the marquis expressed considerable satisfaction at her high station, and extreme popularity at court; but by his violent and unconcealed disgust at the attachment existing between the king and la Vallière, forewarned her of the little indulgence which she might anticipate at his hands should she be betrayed into any levity likely to dishonour his name. It is probable, however, that ere long he became weary of seeing his wife devoted to vanity and pleasure, and of the restraint imposed by her official duties; for on succeeding to an inheritance in Provence, he urged her strongly to obtain leave to accompany him when he went to take possession of the property.

[1] Henry Louis de Pardaillan de Gondrin, Marquis de Montespan, of an illustrious family of Gascony.

Madame de Montespan, however, young, beautiful, and admired, and, moreover, not sufficiently attached to her husband to make any sacrifice to his wishes when they interfered so fatally with her own private views, instantly made a pretext of her position; and pleaded with great earnestness the duty which she owed to her royal mistress; suggesting that he should dispose of the estate to some member of his family, and reside entirely in the neighbourhood of the court in which she aspired to shine.

Unable to prevail, and angered by her resistance, the marquis at length resolved to leave Paris alone; and having on his arrival at his new property found everything greatly dilapidated, he applied all his energies to its improvement; still writing, however, from time to time, to urge the marquise to join him. His entreaties and expostulations were of no avail. Madame de Montespan had become satisfied that the king began to feel pleasure in her society; and she resolved not to quit the court.

While this new intrigue was thus commencing, Louis XIV, who had never for a moment lost sight of his Spanish interests, began to make preparations for a campaign. He had no apprehension as regarded the result of this contemplated war; for he was enabled to place himself at the head of thirty-five thousand men; to despatch eight thousand to Dunkirk, which, as well as Mardik, the needy and prodigal Charles II. had sold to him for five millions of livres; and to march four thousand troops upon Luxembourg. Well aware of the importance of Dunkirk, so rashly ceded, and so eagerly acquired, the French king had at once employed thirty thousand men upon the works, and fortified the city on all sides. Between the town and

the citadel a bason had been dug, capable of containing thirty vessels of war; and Dunkirk was no sooner beyond the power of the English, than even their improvident monarch himself was compelled to feel that his cupidity had raised him up a formidable enemy.

Moreover, not content with his internal resources, but anxious also to weaken the hands of his adversary, Louis made an alliance with Portugal and the United Provinces, who saw with misgiving a bigoted and superstitious nation so close upon their frontiers; while Turenne was to act as general of the army; and Colbert had spared no exertion to enable the state to support without injury the expenses of the war.

Louvois, the new war minister, had, on his side, made extraordinary preparations for the campaign. Stores of every description were distributed along the frontier; and the rigid discipline which he had introduced, and enforced by his inflexible austerity, kept every officer to his post; while the presence of a young king, the idol of his army, was well calculated to reconcile them to the increased stringency of their duties.

Military advancement began from that period, in France, to be more certainly secured by merit than by birth; and services instead of ancestors were counted—a circumstance hitherto unprecedented, but most effective upon the spirit of the troops.

Such a campaign could scarcely with propriety be termed a war; for on one side there was, as we have seen, an ambitious monarch, an able general, and a zealous minister; a large body of the best soldiers in Europe, animated by a new and honourable hope; and two allies ready to play their part in the game of con-

quest, whenever their services might be required against the ill-defended province of a kingdom, ruined in its resources, and rent with feuds. On the other hand, there was a widowed queen, whose timid and feeble rule left the monarchy weak and defenceless; and whose prime minister was her confessor, a German Jesuit, called Father Nitard; a man perfectly able to subjugate the will of a penitent, but utterly incapable of governing a state; full of ambition and arrogance, but totally devoid of the necessary qualities calculated to render him eminent either as a minister or a priest. Even before his appointment to the high office for which he was subsequently indebted to the weakness of the widow of Philip IV, he had the insolence to exclaim to the Duke of Lerma, who was reproaching him with his assumption, and reminding of the deference due to his own rank:

"It is you who owe respect to me; I, who have every day your God in my hands, and your queen at my feet."

And yet this presumptuous priest, who was so ready to assert himself even thus blasphemously and disloyally, left the treasury without funds, the fortifications all over the country in a state of ruin, the ports without shipping, and the army undisciplined, unpaid, ill-officered, and utterly incapable of contending with such troops as were about to be brought against them; while the frontiers of Flemish Spain were almost destitute alike of fortresses and of garrisons.

Louis XIV. was so well aware of these facts, that he caused himself to be accompanied throughout the campaign by all the ladies of the court; and the expedition was a mere series of easy triumphs and elegant revel. Luxury of every description was thus introduced into the army

at the same period as the rigid discipline to which we have already alluded. Marshal Turenne had for years used nothing but iron dishes at his table; and the Marquis d'Humières was the first who, at the siege of Arras in 1658, had displayed a service of plate, and introduced the refinement of complicated cookery. In the campaign of 1667, however, where Louis XIV. paraded all the magnificence of his court amid the turmoil of a camp, every individual strove to outvie his neighbour in splendour and expense.

The progress of the French was one continued triumph. Louis presented himself before Charleroi, and entered the city as he would have entered Paris; Ath and Tourney were taken in two days; Furnes, Armentières, and Courtrai held out no better; he descended the trench in person before Douai, and took it the next day;[1] but the most remarkable event of the campaign was the siege of Lille, on which occasion the Count de Brouai, its governor, sent to ask him which quarter of the camp he occupied, in order that he might not fire upon it. His answer was, "All quarters."

When the action took place he exposed himself considerably; and a page of the royal stable was killed immediately behind him in the trench; upon which a soldier, alarmed at his danger, seized him abruptly by the arm, and dragged him back, exclaiming, "This is no place for you!" As the king hesitated, startled by the words and action of the trooper, the veteran Marquis de Charost[2] snatched off

[1] Le Siècle de Louis XIV.

[2] Charost was celebrated for his courage in the field, and had greatly distinguished himself during the wars of Henry IV. He had been the *protégé* of Richelieu, who made him captain of the

his plumed hat, which was too remarkable, and placed his own upon the head of the king, whispering as he did so: "Sire, the wine is drawn, and it must be drank." The young monarch heard and appreciated the admonition, remained in the trench, and felt grateful to him throughout his life for the timely lesson.

Every day M. de Brouai, finding that there was no ice in the camp, sent a given quantity to the king; who on one occasion desired the gentleman by whom it was brought to request the governor, if he could conveniently do so, to increase the supply.

"Sire;" answered the Spaniard, bowing gravely; "he is chary of it, because he hopes that the siege will be of long duration; and he is apprehensive that Your Majesty may ultimately suffer from the deprivation." And he made a second profound bow.

"Tell M. de Brouai;" exclaimed the Marquis de Charost; "not to act as the governor of Douai did, who surrendered himself like a rogue."

"Are you mad, Charost?" asked the king.

"Not at all, sire;" answered the veteran composedly; "for M. de Brouai is my cousin."[1]

The hope of the brave veteran was realized, as Lille held out for nine days before it capitulated, although the Spaniards had only eight thousand men to oppose to the victorious troops of Louis; and the vanguard of even this

body guard; and Mazarin, who affected to protect all who were the favourites of his predecessor, became his friend, and recommended him first to the queen-mother, and subsequently to the king. His son married the only daughter of Fouquet by his first marriage, but even the disgrace of that minister never diminished the court favour of the Charosts.

[1] Louis XIV, sa Cour, et le Regent.

little army was cut to pieces by the Marquis de Créqui, while the main body took refuge under the walls of Brussels and Mons, leaving the French king master of the field, without any further engagement.

The rapidity of these conquests spread alarm in Brussels, whose inhabitants hastened to transport all their property to Antwerp, uncertain whether Louis would not terminate the campaign by making himself master of the whole of Flanders; which it is extremely probable he might have done, had his army been strong enough to enable him to garrison the towns, which were ready to open their gates. He was, however, advised by Louvois rather to leave large bodies of troops in the cities already taken, and to fortify them in an efficient manner; to which he acceded, confiding the direction of the works to Vauban,[1] one of those wonderful men of genius who were the best illustrations of his reign; and this arrangement completed, the victorious monarch hastened to return to his capital, to enjoy the acclamations of the people, the adoration of the courtiers, and the festivities of the court.

[1] Sebastian Leprestre de Vauban, a celebrated engineer, was born at St. Leger de Foucheret, in the department of the Nièvre in 1633, and in his 17th year entered the regiment of Condé, to whose fortunes he attached himself. He was soon distinguished for his talents in engineering; and greatly assisted in the sieges of Stenai, Clermont, Landrecies, Condé, Valenciennes, Montmédi, Ypres, Gravelines, and Oudenarde. He directed that of the fortress of Luxembourg in 1683. Appointed marshal of France in 1703, commissary general of fortifications, and governor of Lille; he died in 1717. Vauban restored 300 ancient fortresses, and constructed 33 new ones; conducted 53 sieges, and was in more than 140 engagements. He left behind him several writings; among others, a *Treaty on the Attack and Defence of Fortified Cities*, a work on the *Royal Tythe*; and *Hours of Idleness*, a literary miscellany.

The Flemish compaign had, however, other results beside those which we have already recapitulated. The king had been brought into frequent contact with Madame de Montespan, both at Versailles and St. Germain; but during the journey to the frontier, she had still better opportunities of ingratiating herself; nor had she been less careful to conciliate the favour of the queen; of which she availed herself to undermine her partiality for la Vallière so successfully, that the latter was subjected to constant affronts, which reached their culminating point on an occasion when she chanced to be somewhat late in joining the dinner party; and found, on entering the room, that the queen had so filled the table that no seat remained unoccupied; upon which she immediately retired to her apartments, where she learnt that Her Majesty had expressly forbidden that refreshments should be furnished to her; a command which was, however, disobeyed.[1]

The mortification she had experienced nevertheless determined Madame de la Vallière to return at once to Compiègne, where she had left Madame Colbert and her children, and thence to proceed to Versailles, to await the conclusion of the campaign; and she had actually taken leave of the queen, after writing to inform the king of her intention, and made a day's journey towards the capital, when a letter from her royal lover, reproaching her with her precipitation, at once caused her to retrace her steps.

It was late in the evening when she was overtaken by the messenger, and a long day's journey separated her from the king; she, therefore, resolved to

[1] Le Siècle de Louis XIV.

travel all night, in order to overtake the court by dawn; and just as the sun rose, she arrived at Guise.

On inquiring for the queen she found, however, that she had left the town an hour previously; and terrified lest the royal pair should meet before she had secured an opportunity of explaining to Louis the reasons which had induced her abrupt departure, she desired her attendants to increase their speed, and to overtake the army at any risk. She was obeyed; but as the carriage was advancing through a gorge of the mountain, she was unable to calculate her progress; until, arriving in a spot that commanded the plain, she suddenly perceived the whole body of the army with a small detached group a short distance in advance, and at once recognised the personal staff of the king, from which she was only separated by a newly ploughed field, encumbered with stones.

As her coachman hesitated to advance, fearing an accident, she repeated her commands, and ere long was in considerable peril from the severe shocks occasioned to her equipage by the masses of rock that were scattered in every direction; but she, nevertheless, persisted in advancing, as she found that she was gaining ground upon the queen, who followed the beaten road. She had, however, scarcely time to distinguish the figure of the king, when a violent crash warned her that her carriage had given way, and in another instant it was overturned. A sharp pain in her arm convinced her that she had sustained a severe hurt, but she was too anxious to justify herself, to heed the accident; and she was no sooner disengaged from the fallen vehicle than she insisted that it should be raised, in order that she

might pursue her journey. With some difficulty this was accomplished; and she soon reached the king, which she had no sooner done than, with an exclamation of delight, she showed herself at the window.

"What! before the queen!" said Louis, so soon as he had recognised the adventurous traveller; and with these few but reproachful words, he turned the head of his horse, and moved forward towards the advancing equipages of the royal retinue.

Maria Theresa, who had witnessed the whole proceeding, was pale with anger; and was about to send one of her attendants to arrest la Vallière on the spot, when her ladies entreated her to desist, representing the probable consequences which would ensue to herself from such a measure; and she was at length appeased by the blame which they liberally bestowed upon the insolent favourite, of which no one was more lavish than Madame de Montespan, who wound up her objurgation by exclaiming: "Heaven preserve me from being the mistress of the king! But if I were so unfortunate, I should never have the effrontery to appear before the queen."

Maria Theresa thanked her by a look of gratitude, for she had never for a moment suspected the virtue, and far less the rivalry of the marchioness, who was her almost constant companion; and who was accustomed to bear her company every evening, while she awaited the arrival of the king in her apartments. Insensibly the lady of the palace acquired a habit of lingering near her royal mistress after his entrance, and Louis on his side of including her in the conversation which ensued; and as she possessed in an eminent degree the "wit of the Mortemars," and was caustic,

agreeable, full of anecdote, and an admirable mimic, he soon acquired a marked taste for her society; while the queen, thoroughly deceived by her professions, and the fact that she even joined her in her private devotions, encouraged her in her exertions to amuse the monarch, flattering herself that by rendering her own circle more agreeable, she should ultimately succeed in weaning him from his passion for la Vallière.

But to return to the perilous exploit of the duchess. The queen, although she had permitted herself to be dissuaded from giving any public sign of her displeasure, nevertheless returned the greeting of her royal consort when he reached her carriage, with such marked coldness, that he inquired its cause; when she overwhelmed him with reproaches, for having permitted her to be subjected to such an affront as she had just experienced. Soon wearied by her complaints, the king, after a brief attempt to calm her anger, in which he was unsuccessful, withdrew his hat, and after a cold but graceful salutation, galloped off in the direction of the troops; but in five minutes more he was beside the equipage of la Vallière, whom he found drowned in tears. Their reconciliation was the work of an instant; and on ascertaining that she had experienced an accident, he ordered his surgeon to be immediately summoned, who soon discovered that the arm was injured, and must be instantly bound up.

The king remained to support the duchess during the operation in a state of the most painful agitation, after which he himself accompanied her in a carriage to Guise, where he lodged her in the best house that the town afforded, and ordered M. Séguin not to leave her for a moment. A slight fever supervened, but on the morrow

she was declared convalescent; and Louis, who had little sympathy for lingering indisposition in those about him, sent a carriage to convey her to the mass, and his own equerry to attend her. She consequently appeared with her wounded arm in a sling; and at the conclusion of the service the king insisted upon her resuming her place in the queen's carriage.

In the interval the royal pair had again met; and when Madame de la Vallière presented herself at the moment of departure, all the ladies by whom it was already occupied hastened to offer their places, not even excepting MADEMOISELLE, who was seated beside the queen; nor did Maria Theresa herself fail to greet her trembling rival with more than ordinary graciousness. In the evening, as the supper was served, Madame de la Vallière prepared to withdraw, but was detained by the queen herself, who motioned her to a seat opposite her own; while the king exerted himself to evince his satisfaction at what was taking place about him. On glancing round the table, la Vallière remarked that Madame de Montespan had not joined the circle; nor was she the only individual who had noticed her absence. In the course of the evening she however appeared, and was immediately besieged with inquiries and reproaches, to which she pleaded a violent headache; and, contrary to her usual custom, instead of seeking to enliven the party by sallies of wit or brilliant freaks of fancy, she assumed a melancholy demeanour, which attracted the attention of the king.

On one or two occasions she approached Madame de la Vallière and conversed with her in an under tone, but the moment she saw the monarch about to join them, she moved away; and eventually she seated herself at a card-

table, and motioned her unsuspicious rival to her side. The king shortly afterwards followed, declaring that he would give her advice which would ensure her success; but she played wilfully wrong; and after having for a short time supported his remonstrances, remarked that she saw His Majesty wished her to leave the table, and that, as such was the case, she would ask Madame de la Vallière to take her cards, in order that the party might not be broken up, which would displease the queen; and so saying, she rose, gave her chair to the duchess, and seated herself in the recess of a window. For a time the king continued his instructions to la Vallière, but with evident absence of mind; and eventually he followed the marchioness, and stood conversing earnestly with her. Maria Theresa smiled; but it was far otherwise with the wretched Louise, who became suddenly conscious that her day of triumph was drawing to its close.

Another circumstance sufficed to assure her of the fact. The king had altered the arrangement of the apartments, and given to Madame de Montespan that which had previously been occupied by the Duchess de Montausier,[1] which was only separated from his own by a short staircase; and this change had no sooner been made than it was remarked that the marchioness frequently quitted the queen's card-table, or the drive, and retired to her room; and that the king disappeared at the same time and shut himself into his own.

But however prosperously the wily marchioness might be conducting her intrigue, she was not without mis-

[1] Julia d'Angennes, first lady of honour to Anne of Austria, who in 1654 married Charles de St. Maure, Duke de Montausier; and was subsequently governess to the dauphin.

givings on the subject of her husband. His frequent and urgent letters broke in frightfully upon her dreams of ambition; and at length she received one in which he offered to pledge himself that if she would devote five or six years exclusively to his interests, he would then restore her for the remainder of her life to the gaieties of the court. "Come and take a near view, my dear Athenaïs;" it concluded; "of these stupendous Pyrenees, whose every ravine is a landscape, and every valley an Eden. To all these beauties yours is alone wanting; you will be here, like Diana, the divinity of these noble forests."

The flatteries of a husband had, however, unfortunately, no attraction for Madame de Montespan. In reply to this urgent appeal she contented herself by asserting that his impatience and ill-humour made her wretched; and that, as five or six of her colleagues[1] were either sick or absent, it was impossible for her to abandon her post; but pledged her honour that in the autumn, on the return of the court from Fontainebleau, she would immediately join him.

This compromise by no means satisfied the marquis, who had already been apprised that she was endeavouring, under the mask of friendship for Madame de la Vallière, to attract the attention of the king; and he consequently wrote, coldly and imperatively, to inform her of the extent of his knowledge; and to announce his intention of returning to Paris, in order to ascertain the exact nature of her imprudence, which he threatened to expose not only to her own family, but to the world;

[1] After the death of Anne of Austria, Louis XIV. increased the number of ladies of the palace from six to eighteen.

commanding her, at the same time, to confide her son to the guardianship of his messenger, that he might not become contaminated by contact with a mother who had thrown off all restraint; and adding, that on his arrival in the capital he would shut her up in a convent, if she had not previously intrigued to send him to the Bastille.

The threat came, however, too late to produce the desired effect upon the erring wife. She had already secured a powerful protector; but it nevertheless operated so greatly on her fears, that on the evening of the day on which it reached her, the king detected her agitation, and insisted upon learning its cause. Madame de Montespan replied by placing the letter in his hand. The king changed colour as he read; and then observed, that their position was one of difficulty, and exacted great precaution, but that he would take care that no violence should be offered to her; and advised her at once to give up her son, who "was useless, and perhaps inconvenient;" while the fact of being deprived of his child might drive the marquis to some act of severity.

To this, however, Madame de Montespan would not consent, declaring that she would sooner lose her life; and her tears so moved the king that he ultimately desired her to retain the boy near her, and he would endeavour to obviate the consequences. The marquis redeemed his word. Ere long he arrived in Paris, and cited his wife before the authorities of the Châtelet. He addressed a firm and reproachful letter to the king; and applied to the Pope for a *reclamation*, urging him to authorize a divorce; but although he unweariedly pursued his solicitations through three entire months, His

Holiness, fearful of offending Louis XIV, refused to accede to his petition; and he no sooner became convinced that he should not succeed, than he assumed the deepest mourning, hung the carriage entrance of his house with black, and covered his servants and his equipages with the same sable drapery. He then ordered a funeral service to take place at the parish church, to which he invited the whole town and neighbourhood; and publicly asserted that he had no longer a wife; that Madame de Montespan had died of an attack of levity and ambition; and even declared his intention of contracting a second marriage at the termination of his year of widowhood.

This exhibition of contempt for the marchioness, so ludicrously displayed, greatly annoyed the king, who could not shut his eyes to the fact that he was himself involved in the ridicule which it excited; but fortunately for his self-love, the marquis, having satisfied his vengeance by this exposure of the intrigue, shortly afterwards left France.

"Not being naturally of a bad disposition," says Madame de Montespan with great complacency, after having given the above detail; "I never would allow M. de Louvois to send him to the Bastille. On the contrary, I secretly paid his debts, which amounted to more than fifty thousand crowns, very glad to do him this service in return for the evil which he said of me."[1]

It is a strange proof of the perverted feeling and accommodating morality of the time, that although, upon the evidence of his guilty wife, M. de Montespan had left no

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Montespan.

measure untried to reclaim her, there is nevertheless not one historian of the century who does not seek to cast upon the forsaken husband the odium of this revolting intrigue; and affect to say that, from motives of base and sordid interest, he encouraged a crime which made his home desolate, and induced him to forsake his country. We have faithfully quoted the account of the whole transaction from the words of Madame de Montespan herself, who cannot be suspected of exhibiting too great a partiality towards a man whom she had so greatly wronged; and consider all argument upon such a question as worse than supererogatory.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DAUGHTERS OF GASTON, DUKE OF ORLEANS—LA GRANDE MADEMOISELLE—MADEMOISELLE DE VALOIS, DUCHESS OF SAVOY—MADEMOISELLE D'ORLEANS, GRAND DUCHESS OF TUSCANY—MADEMOISELLE D'ALENÇON, DUCHESS DE GUISE—LETTER OF MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ—MADEMOISELLE AND THE DUKE DE LAUZUN—HIS PORTRAIT BY ST. SIMON — HIS COURT-FAVOUR—HIS ADVANCEMENT—HIS INDISCRETION—HIS INSOLENCE—HIS IMPRISONMENT IN THE BASTILLE—HIS PARDON—MADEMOISELLE BECOMES ATTACHED TO HIM—RELUCTANCE OF LAUZUN—MADEMOISELLE OFFERS HIM HER HAND—PRELIMINARIES—INTERVIEW OF LOUIS XIV. AND MADEMOISELLE—THE KING CONSENTS TO HER MARRIAGE WITH LAUZUN—CONSTERNATION OF THE COURT—DONATION BY MADEMOISELLE—LOUIS XIV. WITHDRAWS HIS CONSENT—AGONY OF MADEMOISELLE—SUBMISSION OF LAUZUN—THE PRIVATE MARRIAGE—NEW ARREST OF LAUZUN—HIS INGRATITUDE.

AND now we will glance for a moment at the family of Gaston, Duke d'Orleans. MADEMOISELLE, the sole heiress of all the fiefs of Orleans, and mistress of an income of seven hundred thousand livres; who had refused an emperor, three reigning monarchs, Philip of France, and half a dozen sovereign princes, still remained

unmarried; and was about, in her fortieth year, to bow her pride before a passion as weak as it was ill-placed.

We have seen that this princess had, in the first instance, peremptorily declined an alliance with the Duke of Savoy; the only reason which she condescended to adduce, existing in the fact that Madame Royale, being still alive, and a daughter of Henry IV, governing her duchy with unlimited authority, she should be compelled to yield her precedence, being herself only the daughter of a younger son of France, who died in banishment.

By no means driven to despair by his first failure, the young duke next asked the hand of her sister, Mademoiselle de Valois, as we have stated elsewhere; and this princess, whose disposition was all mildness and obedience, at once complied with the wish of her mother that she should accept so desirable an alliance. The arrangement was, however, kept secret from MADEMOISELLE, who was then in exile at St. Fargeau; and who was, in her ignorance of what had taken place, betrayed into her offer of marrying the once rejected duke, as an alternative to avoid the alliance of the King of Portugal.[1]

Mademoiselle de Valois, who was the handsomest of the four sisters, did not long profit by the affection of her new family, to whom she at once endeared herself by her amiable qualities; being cut off in the pride of her beauty, and the height of her happiness, in the year 1664, nearly at the same period as Madame Royale, and the Duchess of Parma; the high-minded Princess Marguerite, who never recovered the mortification of her abortive journey to Lyons.

1 Madame de Montespan.

Mademoiselle d'Orleans, the elder sister of the second wife, was a fair and pretty woman, but indiscreet in her conversation, and undignified in her manner; who at the period when her marriage was mooted with the Prince Medicis, Grand Duke of Tuscany, had already bestowed her affections upon her maternal cousin Prince Charles of Lorraine; a fact of which the king was cognizant, but would not countenance the connexion, as he secretly desired to possess himself of the principality of the suitor; and the duchess-dowager consequently entreated her daughter to become Grand Duchess of Tuscany. The marriage proved an unhappy one; which was attributable to the fact that they were in constant dissension on the subject of etiquette, upon which they could never come to a satisfactory understanding.

The younger of the three princesses, Mademoiselle d'Alençon, had she possessed more animation and intellect might have been esteemed a beauty, but she was alike devoid of mind and of ambition; and her fine black eyes were cold and expressionless. She had for some time been the guest of MADEMOISELLE, by whose assumption and arrogance she was rendered miserable, when Mademoiselle de Guise,[1] the last representative of the original house of Lorraine, whose immense wealth secured to her a brilliant position in the world, resolved if possible to secure her hand for her nephew the young Duke de Guise, then only seventeen years of age; but in order to accomplish this object it was necessary to obtain the consent of the king, who was averse to the marriage, but by whom it was, nevertheless, ultimately

[1] Sister of the celebrated Cardinal de Lorraine, Archbishop of Rheims, &c.

permitted. The bridegroom, astonished at his good fortune, and totally devoid both of pretension and ambition, could not suppress his surprise when the monarch, instead of a dowry, presented to the young duchess a magnificent set of tapestry hangings, and a service of enamelled gold, studded with jewels.

The unfortunate duke had, however, little reason to congratulate himself upon his unequal marriage, for it had been arranged that Mademoiselle d'Alençon was to retain all her privileges as a member of the royal house; and consequently M. de Guise could only occupy a folding-seat[1] in her presence. When she seated herself at table, he presented her dinner-napkin; and when she was established in her arm-chair, and had unfolded the *serviette*, M. de Guise meanwhile standing before her, she ordered a plate to be placed for him, which was always ready upon the sideboard. This plate was then carried to the bottom of the table, where she desired him to sit down. Every other ceremony was observed with the same punctiliousness, and recommenced every day without any increase of condescension on the part of the wife; nor did he ever venture to address her save as "Your Royal Highness."

The duchess became a widow in 1671, when the duke was carried off by small-pox, leaving a son, who also died four years subsequently. Madame de Guise thenceforward grew extremely devout, and attached herself to the celebrated abbot of La Trappe, whom she survived only a few months.[2]

[1] A *pliant* or folding seat was a compromise of etiquette, more honourable than a stool, and less dignified than a chair.

[2] Mémoires de St. Simon.

MADEMOISELLE was, therefore, as we have already stated, the only one of the sisters who remained unmarried; and we cannot better announce the next phase of her career than in the sprightly words of Madame de Sévigné in a letter to M. de Coulanges, her cousin.

"I am about to inform you of the circumstance the most astonishing, the most surprising, the most miraculous, the most triumphant, the most bewildering, the most unheard-of, the most singular, the most extraordinary, the most incredible, the most unforeseen, the most immense, the most minute, the most rare, the most common, the most conspicuous, the most secret until to-day, the most brilliant, and the most enviable; in short, a circumstance of which there has been but one example throughout past centuries, and even that one is not precisely similar. * * * * I cannot make up my mind to tell it,—guess it,—I will give you three guesses: *do you throw your tongue to the dogs?* Well then! here it is. M. de Lauzun is to marry, on Sunday next, at the Louvre,—guess who? I will give you four, I will give you ten, I will give you a hundred guesses. Madame de Coulanges says: It is by no means difficult to guess; it is to Madame de la Vallière: not at all, Madam. It is then to Mademoiselle de Retz: not at all, you are a mere country gentlewoman. The truth is we are very dull, say you; it is to Mademoiselle Colbert. Still less. It is then, assuredly, Mademoiselle de Créqui: you are wrong again. It must end by my telling you: he marries, on Sunday next, at the Louvre, by permission of the king, Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle de,—Mademoiselle,—guess the name: he marries Mademoiselle,—on my word, by my word, my solemn word!—MADEMOISELLE, the great Mademoiselle; Mademoiselle, the daughter o.

the late MONSIEUR; Mademoiselle, the granddaughter of Henry IV; Mademoiselle d'Eu, Mademoiselle de Dombes, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, Mademoiselle d'Orleans; Mademoiselle, cousin-german to the king; Mademoiselle, destined to the throne; Mademoiselle, the only match in France which was worthy of MONSIEUR. There is a fine subject of gossipry. If you exclaim, if you are beside yourselves, if you say that we have fibbed, that it is not true, that we are quizzing you, that it is a poor jest, and a tame fancy enough; if, in short, you abuse us, we shall consider that you are right; we should have done as much to you. Adieu; the letters which go by this post will show you if we tell the truth or not."

This ejaculatory letter will prove the extent of the astonishment felt by the patrician families of France at the intelligence which Madame de Sévigné hastened to impart to her family. It was even so: the punctilious, fastidious, arrogant, and self-worshipping MADEMOISELLE, after amusing herself by rejecting, during her years of bloom and grace, half the sovereign princes of Europe, had, indeed, in the autumn of her life, bestowed her unsolicited affections upon a mere handsome adventurer; and, what is still more extraordinary, the haughty Louis XIV, imagining a parallel between the attachment of his cousin for Lauzun, and his own for la Vallière, had actually suffered himself to be persuaded to permit a marriage wholly without precedent, and calculated to shock the prejudices of all the royal and noble families throughout his kingdom.

We have already mentioned the presentation of M. de Peguilain to Louis XIV. by his uncle the Duke de Grammont; and the immediate effect which he produced upon that monarch.

Antonin Nompar de Caumont, Duke de Lauzun, born in 1632, arrived in Paris under the name of Marquis de Peguilain; and, according to St. Simon, was "a little beau, well made, with an open and intellectual countenance; full of ambition, whims, and fancies; envious of every one, never satisfied with anything; always anxious to exceed his limits; without any literary taste or knowledge; naturally irritable, misanthropical, and abrupt; very profuse in his habits; constitutionally ill-natured; eminently jealous; a warm friend when he thought proper to be so, which was rare; a ready enemy even towards those who were indifferent towards him: clever in detecting defects, and in discovering and bestowing ridicule; a merciless quizzer; extremely and dangerously brave; a clever courtier, according to circumstances haughty to insolence, or pliable to servility; in short, to define his character in three words, as his actions have proved him, the boldest, the most dexterous, and the most cunning of men."

Such as he is here described, the crafty marquis soon won upon the king, who required constant amusement, and found it in the conversation of this new favourite; for whom he raised a regiment of dragoons, appointing him shortly afterwards adjutant-general, and finally colonel-general of cavalry.

Some months subsequently the Duke de Mazarin having decided upon retiring from the court, was anxious to dispose of his charge of grand-master of the artillery; and this fact had no sooner reached the ears of Lauzun than he applied to the king for the appointment; who promised it to him without difficulty, provided he kept his intention perfectly secret, telling him that it should be

arranged on the day fixed for holding a council of finance. This day had no sooner arrived than Lauzun established himself in the anteroom through which Louis passed to the council-hall, and entered into conversation with Nyert, the first valet de chambre on duty, who inquired in a friendly manner the nature of his business. Lauzun, who now considered himself sure of the appointment, believed that he should secure the interest of this man by informing him of what was about to take place, and accordingly betrayed his secret; upon which Nyert offered his congratulations, drew out his watch, and perceiving, as he asserted, that he had still time to execute a pressing order given him by the king, which would not occupy more than five minutes, left the room, sprang up a private staircase which led to the study of Louvois, and briefly communicated to him the intelligence which he had just gained.

Lauzun was the friend of Colbert, and this fact alone sufficed to ensure to him the enmity of Louvois; who, moreover, feared the influence of the reigning favourite in a charge operating so powerfully, and interfering so closely with the war department. He accordingly dismissed Nyert with warm thanks, begged him immediately to resume his post, and hastily gathering up a few papers to serve as his introduction, walked through the anteroom, where he found Lauzun and Nyert again conversing together. The latter affected extreme surprise at his appearance, and represented to him that the council was still sitting; to which the minister replied that he was compelled to enter, as he had pressing business with the king, and proceeded on his way.

When he entered, Louis rose, and retiring with him to

the recess of a window, inquired the cause of his coming; to which he answered that he understood His Majesty was about to declare M. de Lauzun grand-master of the artillery, who was awaiting the declaration of his appointment at the close of the council; that he was quite aware of the power of the sovereign to bestow his favours as he saw fit, but that he considered it his duty to venture to represent to His Majesty the incompatibility which existed between M. de Lauzun and himself; that His Majesty was aware of the haughty wilfulness of the former, who would inevitably make serious changes in the administration of the artillery without consulting any one; while that particular charge was so intimately connected with the war department, that it was vitally impossible for the service to be carried on should there exist a declared misunderstanding between the grand-master and the secretary of state; as that misunderstanding would involve His Majesty in the annoyance of being every day importuned by their mutual claims, upon which he alone was competent to judge.

The king, greatly vexed to find that his secret had been discovered by the very individual from whom he had been most anxious to conceal it, reflected for a moment, and then saying; "It is not yet done"—turned away, and resumed his seat at the council.

When the members separated, Lauzun presented himself to the king as he passed out, and was unable even to catch his eye. Twenty times during the day he placed himself upon his path, but Louis never alluded to the appointment. At length, as he was assisting at the *petit coucher*, the duke ventured to ask if his commission were signed; when the king answered coldly, that it

could not be done yet, but that he would think about it. Several days having, however, elapsed, without any further mention of the matter, Lauzun requested a private audience; and after a few inconsequent remarks on both sides, the insolent favourite claimed the fulfilment of the royal promise, in terms equally imperious and unbecoming. To this arrogant appeal Louis replied that he considered his promise to be annulled, inasmuch as it had been made only on a condition of secrecy on his own part which he had violated; when Lauzun, moving a few paces aside, turned his back upon the king, drew his sword, broke the blade across his knee, and swore that he would never again serve a prince who was capable of so *foully* falsifying his word.

The eye of the king flamed for an instant; but as he raised his cane to strike the audacious courtier, a feeling of what was due to his own dignity caused him to throw it through the window near which he stood, as he said sternly; "I should be sorry to strike a man of quality," and forthwith left the room.[1]

Lauzun felt his error when it was too late. The next day he was an inmate of the Bastille; and the artillery was given to the Count de Lude.[2]

While a prisoner the duke committed for awhile a thousand follies, suffered his beard to grow, and talked like a madman; but soon wearying of his incarceration, he became more rational, and accused himself of his downfal, declaring that the king had been more lenient than he deserved, and that he regretted nothing save the royal favour, although his fortunes were utterly marred.

[1] Mémoires de St. Simon.

[2] Afterwards Duke de Lude.

As he anticipated, all these loyal expressions were reported to the sovereign, who, flattered by such extraordinary devotion to his person, and anxious to regain the companionship which he had lost, caused it to be intimated to him that, conciliated by his repentance, His Majesty was willing to bestow upon him the captaincy of the guards; but, contrary to the expectations of Louis, the favourite, upon learning this sudden and unhoped-for revolution in the royal mind, flattered himself that he was indispensable, and might make better terms; and the result of this conviction was a respectful but firm refusal to accept the appointment. The king was not, however, to be denied; the proposition was repeated; and eventually Lauzun, with an affected reluctance which savoured of condescension, agreed to consent to the wishes of the sovereign. He accordingly passed from the Bastille to the most confidential post at court, paid his respects to the king, took the oath, and found himself more than ever popular at court.[1]

It was at this period that he first attracted the attention of MADEMOISELLE, who after giving a very partial and garbled account of the transaction which we have just narrated, declares that he performed his duties with a noble, graceful, and easy demeanour, that gratified the king; and that, when she congratulated him upon his restoration to favour, he assured her he was quite conscious of the honour which she conferred upon him by thus evincing an interest in his fortunes. In short, the princess confesses that she thenceforth began to look upon him as an extraordinary man, whose con-

[1] Lauzun was appointed captain of the guard in 1669. (*Dangeau.*)

versation was so agreeable, that she sought opportunities of enjoying it, and discovered that he expressed himself in a manner unapproachable by any other person.[1] Indeed, her whole account of the advances which she made to the handsome courtier, are inexpressibly amusing: his evident reluctance to involve himself with a mistress of forty years of age is shadowed out legibly, even while the deluded lady herself supposes it to be merely the awe inspired by her high birth and her personal attributes; and this inconvenient respect became at last so apparently unconquerable, that MADEMOISELLE was compelled not only to turn upon him all her "nods, becks, and wreathed smiles," but actually to hint to him that her hand was at his service. Thenceforward, she encountered no opposition—his ambition was aroused—he remembered her rank, her wealth—and that her husband would become the cousin of the King of France—and the whole court contained no other lover whose devotion could emulate that of the happy M. de Lauzun.

MADEMOISELLE, his senior by twelve or fourteen years, never imagined that he could love her from interested motives; for even conscious as she was both of the dignity of her rank, and the value of her possessions, her vanity was more powerful than her reason; and, involved at the age of four and forty in a first passion, she obeyed its dictates, as though she were still in the bloom of her youth and beauty; and forgot that other eyes must detect a change to which she continued wilfully blind.

Lauzun, whose numerous irregularities revenged him on the follies of his elderly mistress, encouraged her in her weakness; affecting the languishing glances, and lover-

[1] Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

like demonstrations exacted by her folly; and their attachment once reciprocately declared, drew from her in their private conversation a detailed account of her possessions; which she revealed to him, even to the value of her plate and jewels. This done, the passion of the wily courtier reached its culminating point, for by careful calculation he ascertained that she was the mistress of at least forty millions. Having satisfied himself on this point, he next proceeded to inquire what would be his own position, should the king be induced to ratify their marriage; and if he should be elevated to the rank of a prince. This, however, she frankly told him, that she had not sufficient influence to accomplish; but that she would make him Duke de Montpensier, with an independent income of five hundred thousand livres. Then he desired to know if their united escutcheon would bear the coronet of the husband, or the crown of the wife; to which she answered that, as she should not change her name, she could not change her shield; and that her armorial bearing must remain entire, supported by the crown with its *fleur-de-lis*. The next inquiry was whether their children should be princes *de facto;* to which she declared that she saw no impediment: and finally, if there was a probability of his being ultimately raised to the rank of prince, and recognised as a *highness* from the signing of the contract?

This last inquiry plunged MADEMOISELLE into a train of uneasy reflection; for although, blinded by her passion, and misled by her vanity, she did not discover the supreme egotism of her lover, but rather rejoiced to find him punctilious upon points which were so important to herself, and so precious in her own estimation, she was

suddenly aroused to a serious doubt of the acquiescence of the king in such unprecedented arrangements; but as she was not easily induced to yield any point upon which she had resolved; and that, in the present case, she believed the whole happiness of her future life to be involved in her marriage with her lover, she determined at once to remove her doubts by a personal interview with the king. She accordingly ordered her equipage and her equerries; and having taken up her gloves and fan from the table, bade a hasty farewell to the anxious Lauzun, and drove to the Louvre.

The astonishment of Louis XIV. was unbounded. He reminded her of the thrones she had rejected; of the fact that she had entered her forty-fifth year; he endeavoured to make her sensible of the absurdity of her attachment; he essayed alike remonstrances and ridicule; but MADEMOISELLE was not to be repulsed; and ultimately, annoyed and even disgusted by her pertinacity, he desired her, as she was resolved to commit so great a folly, and was quite old enough to judge for herself, to rid him at once of her tears and sighs, and to do as she pleased.[1]

It must not, however, be supposed that a monarch like Louis XIV. conceded so extreme a point as this to the absurd demonstrations of an elderly coquette, and thus compromised his own dignity by a weakness which was unworthy of him; for such was far from being the case. The lamentations of MADEMOISELLE were so lengthy that they afforded him ample time for reflection; and there can be no doubt but he became, ere long, conscious that

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Montespan.

it might be more consonant to his own interests to permit the marriage, than to persist in his opposition. MADEMOISELLE was the sole remain of the once formidable party of the Fronde, and was even yet reluctant to forget her past triumphs; by marrying a prince of the blood she would retain at least a reflection of her former importance; while in becoming the wife of an obscure individual like Lauzun, the richest heiress in France would descend from her pedestal, and figure merely as a simple gentlewoman; and thus, by suffering a reluctant consent to be wrung from him, he would rid himself of a troublesome and arrogant adversary.

On the morrow, therefore, the marriage was publicly announced; on the following day MADEMOISELLE and her betrothed received congratulatory visits from all the court; and on that which ensued the princess, for the purpose of investing M. de Lauzun with the titles and honours requisite to adorn their contract, made him a formal donation of four duchies: the countship of Eu, the first peerage in France, giving precedence of all other peers; the duchy of Montpensier, of which he immediately assumed the name; the duchy of St. Fargeau; and the duchy of Châtellerault; the whole estimated at twenty-two millions.

Nothing then remained save to sign the contract, to which it was anticipated that the king would append his name on the ensuing morning; but in the course of the day the queen herself, who seldom ventured to give an opinion upon any transaction in which she was not personally involved, spoke indignantly against the alliance; while *Monsieur* declared that he would attend the marriage, if such were the will of His Majesty; but that on leaving

the church he would blow out the brains of the bridegroom.[1] Hence the king passed into the apartments of Madame de Montespan, who informed him of the extravagant donation of the princess; and this fact sufficed to irritate him beyond all bounds. He immediately summoned both MADEMOISELLE and Lauzun to attend him; and then, in the presence of the Prince de Condé, he declared, without preface or apology, that he absolutely forbade them to think any further of their marriage. The suitor received this order with all the submission and respect which could be anticipated; but MADEMOISELLE threw herself into an agony of grief, and besought Louis upon her knees, to revoke a sentence which condemned her to a life of misery. Her entreaties were, however, unavailing; the king was inexorable, and she left his presence drowned in tears, and careless of concealing her despair.

Nothing could exhibit the overweening and egotistical vanity of Lauzun more fully than this failure; which was produced by his having delayed his marriage for a week in order to prepare new liveries, to form an immense establishment, to secure magnificent attire, and to appear at the ceremony with all the splendour of a royal personage; an imprudence which gave his enemies time to work upon the mind of the king, and thus induced his defeat; while the resignation with which he received the royal command to forego his ambitious hopes, astonished and confounded all who were aware of the arrogance and impetuosity of his character. But ere long it was ascertained, that having secured the services of a needy priest by a

[1] Mémoires du Marquis de la Fare.

large bribe, he had accomplished his marriage with the infatuated princess in secret; a fact of which the king no sooner became cognizant, than he caused him to be arrested, and conveyed to the fortress of Pignerol; where, while MADEMOISELLE was consuming her days in an uncontrolled grief that soon destroyed every trace of the good looks upon which she still prided herself; and lamenting to every one by whom she was approached, her cruel separation from "her dear and tender friend, the prisoner;" the duke himself was committing every description of excess of which his position was susceptible; and dissipating in gaming, and the most inane frivolities, the immense sums of money secretly conveyed to him by the princess; and whenever he found his funds exhausted, consoling himself by saying to his friends, "The old woman will send us a fresh supply."[1]

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Montespan.

CHAPTER XX.

DEATH OF THE DUKE DE BEAUFORT IN CANDIA—BIRTH OF THE DUKE DU MAINE—PROSPERITY OF THE FRENCH NATION—MONSIEUR DEMANDS A GOVERNMENT AND A FAUTEUIL—INSIDIOUS ADVICE OF THE CHEVALIER DE LORRAINE—THE VACANT ABBEY—ARREST OF M. DE LORRAINE—RESENTMENT OF MONSIEUR—THE CHEVALIER AT IF—MONSIEUR AT COURT—LOUIS XIV. RESOLVES ON THE CONQUEST OF HOLLAND—VENALITY OF CHARLES II.—A FEMALE AMBASSADRESS—ROYAL PROGRESS—MADEMOISELLE DE KEROUALLE—SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION—THE COURT RETURN TO PARIS—COURT OF MADAME AT ST. CLOUD—DISCONTENT OF MONSIEUR—MARIA-THERESA—ILLNESS OF MADAME—THE SUCCORY-WATER—DEATH OF MADAME—THE POISONERS—INDIGNATION OF THE KING—THE COMPTROLLER OF THE HOUSEHOLD—DEATH OF THE CHEVALIER DE LORRAINE.

We have, however, anticipated the stream of our narrative, in order not to interrupt the history of this extraordinary attachment; for great and melancholy events occurred at court before it reached the climax we have described.

The Duke de Beaufort, Grand-Admiral of France, who had been sent by Louis XIV. to succour Candia, which was besieged by the Turks, had found the whole island, with the exception of the capital, in possession of the enemy; and an attack was resolved upon at daybreak on the 25th of June, which surprised the Moslem troops in their sleep, and compelled them to a confused retreat, that appeared to secure the triumph of the Christian forces; but as they retired, they contrived to

fire several barrels of powder, of which the explosion caused so great a panic among the French soldiery, that, despite all the efforts of their leaders, they, in their turn, abandoned themselves to flight; when M. de Beaufort, enraged at their cowardice, boldly placed himself at the head of a small party of gentlemen who still remained beside him, and dashed furiously into the Turkish ranks, by which he was immediately enclosed, and not even his body was ever again seen.

Meanwhile Madame de la Vallière had become a constant guest in the circle of the queen; where the misunderstandings which constantly took place between herself and Madame de Montespan, were as constantly reconciled by the intervention of the king; and were rendered less serious by the ignorance in which the former yet remained of the extent of the attachment that really subsisted between her royal lover and her former friend; the birth of the Duke du Maine[1] being still a profound secret from all the court.

The treaty of Aix la Chapelle had awakened the misgivings of the Dutch, who could not see without uneasiness the approach of so dangerous a neighbour as Louis XIV; nor was their alarm causeless, for the French king had become weary of a peace which rendered nugatory all the preparations that he had made for carrying out a prosperous war. Both externally and internally his kingdom had acquired a strength and a brilliancy which had been hitherto unprecedented. The sea-ports, previously dilapidated and deserted, were surrounded by defences, covered with well-manned vessels,

[1] Louis Augustus de Bourbon, the natural son of the king and Madame de Montespan, was born on the 31st of March, 1670.

and occupied by near sixty ships of large tonnage, capable of being appropriated as men-of-war. New colonies, protected by the French flag, were emigrating to America, the East Indies, and the coast of Africa; and notwithstanding this drain upon the population, immense edifices were in progress of erection under the eyes of the king, which occupied thousands of individuals; the interior of the court and the capital displayed the progress of the more refined arts; literature flourished; and taste and splendour were superseding the ruder and less sumptuous habits of former ages.

At the period of *Monsieur's* marriage, the king had exerted all his generosity in order to establish his household, and to augment his income in a manner worthy of his exalted rank, and calculated to satisfy his utmost ambition; nor is it probable that the prince, whose greatest ambition was pleasure and costly apparel, would have advanced any further claim upon the royal munificence, had he not been instigated to do so by his two handsome, but ill-selected favourites, the Chevalier de Lorraine,[1] and the Chevalier de Rémecourt; who, anxious to build up their own fortunes upon those of their too-indulgent master, suggested to him the necessity of self-assertion, and the weakness of remaining the passive recipient of his brother's favours.

Thus urged, *Monsieur* commenced by demanding the government of a province, which was refused by the king; who asserted, that these governments could not be given to a brother of the reigning monarch without involving a risk of civil war, as in the case of Gaston

[1] Of the branch of Armagnac.

d'Orleans, who had exerted his authority to levy both men and money in order to oppose the crown; and this reply was accompanied by an intimation that the prince would do well in future to silence the evil advisers who prompted him to such mistaken claims.

Monsieur, somewhat disconcerted, declared that he had received no such instigation, but that he had acted solely on his own judgment.

Louis, however, remained incredulous; and inquired whether it were also his own judgment that had led him to insist on a seat in the privy council; which he had since lost, by having betrayed the proceedings at which he had assisted?

The prince, greatly annoyed by the rejoinder, but unwilling to fail in every point, then declared that he should be less mortified by the unexpected refusal to which he had been subjected, if the king would accord to his wife, who was the daughter of a crowned head, the privilege of occupying an arm-chair in the saloons of the queen; but here again he was fated to prove unsuccessful; for Louis XIV. was less likely to cede a point of etiquette, than a measure of impolicy.

"That cannot be permitted;" said the monarch coldly; "and I beg of you not to persist in such a request. It was not I who established these distinctions; they existed long before you and myself. It is to your interest that the dignity of the crown should neither be weakened nor encroached upon; and if, from Duke of Orleans, you should one day become King of France, I know you well enough to believe that this is a point upon which you would be inexorable. Before God, you and I are two beings precisely similar to our fellow-

men; but before men, we appear as something extraordinary, superior, greater, and more perfect; and the day on which the people cast off this respect, and this voluntary veneration, by which alone monarchy is upheld, they will see in us only their equals, suffering from the same evils, and subject to the same weaknesses as themselves; and this once accomplished, all illusion will be over. The laws, no longer sustained by a controlling power, will become black lines upon white paper; and your chair without arms, and my *fauteuil*, will be simply two pieces of furniture of equal importance. However, in order to gratify your wishes, I will appoint you to the government of any province that you may select; if you will, on your side, immediately concede in writing, your consent to be put upon your trial as a mere subject, whenever there may exist any disturbance, of whatever description, in the province under your command."

Philip d'Orleans at once saw the incompatibility of such an arrangement, and withdrew his claim. But, lenient as the king had shown himself towards his brother, whose frivolous habits were ill calculated to sustain his dignity in any position of authority, he was by no means inclined to exhibit equal forbearance towards the crafty and ambitious favourites by whom he had been urged to such unprecedented claims; and, accordingly, on an occasion in which an abbey in the appanage of *Monsieur* became vacant, to which he nominated the Chevalier de Lorraine, Louis refused to ratify the appointment; and commanded le Tellier to inform the nominee that it was not his pleasure he should receive the abbey.

Monsieur, mortified to find his privileges thus invaded, and stung by the reproaches of the disappointed courtier,

lost no time in appealing to the king, and inquiring the reason of his refusal to recognise his donation; but he received no other reply than that which had been given to the questions put by the favourite himself to the secretary of state;—it was not his pleasure.

Monsieur began to evince considerable irritation at this display of fraternal authority; but he was soon silenced by the monarch, who once more calmly advised him to recollect himself, and to get rid of the dangerous counsellers by whom he was surrounded; upon which the prince withdrew, but only to confide his annoyance to the already indignant chevalier, who persisted in assuring him, that he had induced this mortification by his own weakness; and that it behoved him to assume a higher tone with the king, who now took advantage of his timidity and submission.

The effect of this taunt ere long became so apparent in the altered demeanour of *Monsieur*, that Louis resolved to banish the insidious favourite; and he was accordingly arrested at the Château-neuf, while closeted with the prince; and conveyed to Pierre-Encise;[1] a measure which so enraged *Monsieur*, that he immediately retired to Villers-Cotterets,[2] declaring that he would remain there until the chevalier was set free. This undignified proceeding only tended to increase the

[1] A fortress situated on a rock above the right bank of the Saône at Lyons, which was appropriated to the purposes of a state prison. It was demolished in 1793.

[2] Capital of the department of the Aisne, 7½ leagues from Soissons. The town owed its origin to a royal fortress which was destroyed by the English, and subsequently reconstructed by Francis I. Villers-Cotterets is situated in the midst of the forest of Retz.

displeasure of the king; who, after having despatched M. Colbert to expostulate with him upon his conduct, upon finding all remonstrance ineffectual, forwarded an order for the transfer of the Chevalier de Lorraine to the Château d'If,[1] with a prohibition against his either writing or receiving letters, or being permitted to converse with any one not on duty within the walls of the fortress. This last act of severity produced the desired effect: *Monsieur* returned, moody and dissatisfied to court; and the favourite was instructed to take up his abode in Rome.

This amelioration, however, by no means restored the temper of the prince, who loudly accused *Madame* of having caused the exile of the chevalier; and their dissensions became at length so serious, that Louis was compelled to interfere, and to remind *Monsieur* that to his reproaches on the subject of the Duke of Buckingham and the Count de Guiche, the princess, should she see fit to do so, might retort by still graver accusations. The warning was not disregarded; but it was evident that a great coldness had sprung up between the royal couple, which neither attempted to conceal; nor did even the constant correspondence that he continued to entertain with his exiled favourite, suffice to reconcile *Monsieur* to an absence which interfered with his amusements, and embittered his temper.

It was at this period that Louis XIV, who had conceived the project of ultimately subjugating the whole of the Low Countries, resolved to commence his work of

[1] A strong fortress, situated on the Marguerite Island, opposite Cannes; celebrated as having been the prison of the Iron Mask, and Mirabeau.

conquest by appropriating Holland. The conjuncture was a favourable one. The Dutch were masters of the high seas, but no power could be weaker upon land. Allied with Spain and England, and at peace with France, they relied with too much security upon the faith of treaties, and on the benefits of a widely extended commerce. While their navy was unparalleled in Europe, their army was ill-disciplined and despicable; and upon this weakness Louis founded his strongest hope. But before he could with prudence commence the war, it was necessary to detach England from Holland, for so long as their alliance continued, his success remained uncertain; while a rupture between the two states ensured the ruin of the Low Countries.

The French king was, however, quite aware of the facility with which he could obtain the co-operation of Charles II, who had betrayed little indignation at the destruction of his vessels burnt by the Dutch at the very mouth of the Thames; who had evinced no desire to avenge the aggression; who lived only for pleasure, and sought only to reign in indolent indulgence: but even to accomplish this he needed friends; and Louis XIV, who, at that period, could raise money to any extent, and for any purpose, well knew that he required only to proffer a large sum to the English monarch, who was crippled by his parliament, in order to induce him at once to embrace his own interests.[1]

To ensure the neutrality of Spain, the Marquis de Villars was despatched to Madrid, with instructions to impress upon the Spanish cabinet the advantage which must accrue to themselves from the depression of the

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

Low Countries, their natural enemies; while a princess of six and twenty was chosen by Louis XIV. as his plenipotentiary at the English court.

His ambassadress was *Madame*, the sister of Charles II; who having consented to undertake the mission, was escorted to the coast by the monarch and his whole court, under the pretext of a journey to his recent conquests; and the pomp which was exhibited on this occasion exceeded all that had yet been witnessed, even during the reign of the pomp-loving Louis XIV. Thirty thousand men marched in the van and rear of the royal party; some of them destined to reinforce the garrisons of the conquered country; others to work upon the fortifications; and others again to level the roads. The queen was attended by all the most beautiful women of the court. *Madame* shared her coach; and immediately behind them followed a second carriage, containing Madame de la Vallière and Madame de Montespan, who were even occasionally invited to take their places in the royal equipage; while among the ladies selected to accompany *Madame* to the English court, the most beautiful was Louise Rénée de Pannankoët, known as Mademoiselle de Keroualle, who had also her secret instructions,[1] which she had accepted with as much alacrity as her royal mistress.

The journey was, however, more magnificent than pleasurable. The queen displayed a bitterness sufficiently excusable when it is remembered that she was compelled to submit to the constant companionship of the king's mistresses; while *Madame* suffered continually

[1] Subsequently Duchess of Portsmouth.

from the ill humour of her husband, who could not forgive her for having left him in ignorance of the purpose of her visit to England; and who took that opportunity of reproaching her with all his real and imaginary injuries. The happiest of the party was MADEMOISELLE, who could contemplate from her carriage-window the graceful person of M. de Lauzun; who in right of his post, as a Captain of the Guard, was constantly in attendance near the royal party.

Meanwhile all these arrangements had greatly excited the displeasure of *Monsieur*, but Louis affected not to perceive his annoyance; and the illustrious travellers had no sooner reached the coast than *Madame* and her magnificent suite embarked for England. The negotiation was perfectly successful. Charles was enchanted with the superb beauty of Mademoiselle de Keroualle; and the offer of several millions, coupled with a promise that the handsome lady of honour should remain in England, at once induced the weak monarch to accede to all that was asked of him; which he did the more readily from his hatred of the Dutch Calvinists.

A treaty of alliance was consequently drawn up between the two sovereigns; and the ratifications of this treaty were to be exchanged in the course of the following month.

The English king, attended by a large retinue, accompanied his royal sister to Dover; whence she crossed to Calais, where she was received with all the honours due to a triumphant negotiator. The court then returned to Paris, making a festival of every halt; and *Madame* established her court at St. Cloud; while *Monsieur*, enchanted by the movement about him, and

who could never long support a displeasure which, utterly devoid of dignity, always eventually evaporated in noise, began to accept with more complacency the favours by which the king sought to compensate to him for his past annoyance; but he was far from extending the same indulgence to *Madame*, who had once more excited his indignation by accomplishing, during her visit to England, a reconciliation between her royal brother and the Duke of Buckingham.

It was, consequently, matter of notoriety to the whole court that *Monsieur* and *Madame* were once more alienated from each other; when a catastrophe, as melancholy as it was unforeseen, struck terror into every heart in France.

The Duchess d'Orleans was at this period the most influential, and one of the most beautiful women at the French court. Grateful for the effort which she had made to serve him, the king overwhelmed her with courtesy and consideration, and made her the object of every revel, and the medium of every favour; while the queen, who divided her time between her children, her devotions, and her Spanish attendants, was little more than a cipher in her own court. Of timid and retiring habits, the constant gaiety of the royal circle wearied and almost alarmed her; and had not the king interfered, she would have willingly passed her life in her dressing-gown and slippers. On days of state ceremony, when she was compelled to appear in public, her temper was always ruffled; and she was to the last ill at ease in the sumptuous apparel exacted by her rank. Governed by the Señora Molina, her foster-sister, who soon assumed a consequence which her royal mistress was far from

emulating, she never acted save in accordance with her advice; and although incapable of injuring even those by whom she was herself injured, Maria Theresa was equally inert when she might have served those who were faithful to her interests; and thus it was rather duty than inclination which influenced all who formed her private circle.

Thus were things circumstanced when, on the 29th of June (1669) *Madame* rose at an early hour, and visited *Monsieur* in his apartment; after which she conversed for a considerable time with Madame de la Fayette, to whom she declared herself to be in admirable health. On her return from the mass, the princess went to the room of Mademoiselle d'Orleans her daughter, who was then sitting for her picture, when she talked of her late visit to England, and enlivened the whole circle by her joyous spirits; and on entering her own apartments she asked for a cup of succory-water, which she drank; and afterwards dined as usual.

The party then adjourned to the saloon of *Monsieur*, whose portrait was also in progress; and during the sitting, *Madame*, as she was frequently in the habit of doing, laid down upon the cushions and fell asleep.

During her slumber her face became so livid and ghastly that Madame de la Fayette, who was standing beside her, was struck by so extreme a change; and was just in the act of asking herself if it were possible that the mere absence of expression could work so complete an alteration in a countenance which she had always considered handsome, when the princess suddenly awoke in such agony that even *Monsieur* became surprised and alarmed.

As she was retiring to her own room, *Madame* stopped for a moment in the outer apartment to converse with the treasurer of the duke; while *Monsieur* was preparing to start for Paris. On the staircase he however encountered the Duchess de Mecklenburg, and returned with her to the saloon; upon which *Madame,* leaving M. de Boisfrance, hastened to receive her illustrious guest At that moment Madame de Gamache approached with a salver, containing another draught of succory-water in the enamelled cup from which the princess was accustomed to drink; and a second glass for Madame de la Fayette, which were respectively presented to them by Mrs. Gordon, the waiting-woman of *Madame;* but, as the princess still held the cup in one hand, she pressed the other to her side, exclaiming that she had so violent a spasm that she could scarcely draw her breath. She flushed painfully for an instant, and then turned very pale, exclaiming with a painful effort; "Take me away! Take me away! I can support myself no longer."

Terrified and bewildered, Madame de la Fayette and Madame de Gamache upheld the princess, who with considerable difficulty reached her chamber; where she threw herself upon the bed, writhing like a person in convulsions. Her physician was summoned, but he treated the attack lightly, declaring that although painful, it was utterly without importance; while *Madame* continued to gasp out her conviction that she was dying; and to entreat that her confessor might be sent for.

As *Monsieur* knelt beside her bed, the suffering princess threw her arms about his neck, exclaiming; "Alas! Sir, you have long ceased to love me, and you are unjust, for I have never wronged you."

While all around her were in tears, she suddenly raised herself upon her elbow, and declared her conviction that she had been poisoned by the succory-water which she had drank during the day; that probably some mistake had been made; but that she felt she had taken poison; and if they did not wish to see her die they must administer an antidote.

Monsieur, who was still beside her when she made this appalling assertion, betrayed neither agitation nor embarrassment, as he directed that some of the water should be given to a dog, in order that they might ascertain its effect; but Madame Desbordes, her first femme de chambre, immediately interposed, declaring that it was not upon a dog that the experiment should be made, but upon herself, as she had prepared the beverage, into which no noxious ingredient had been introduced; and that she considered it her duty to prove the truth of the assertion.

She accordingly poured out a glass of the succory-water, and drank it on the instant.

Oil and other antidotes were then administered to *Madame*, which served only to excite fearful sickness, without in any degree alleviating the original symptoms; and the princess became more and more anxious for the assistance of a priest, although her physician still maintained that her life was not in the slightest danger.

Before the arrival of the curate of St. Cloud, however, her pulse had become inaudible, and her extremities icy cold; and she was compelled to make her confession supported in the arms of one of her women. At the expiration of three hours, two additional physicians arrived, the one from Paris, and the other from Versailles; but

after a consultation with their colleague, they assured *Monsieur* that he need be under no apprehension, as they would answer for the recovery of the princess.

At length the king arrived in his turn, accompanied by the queen and the Countess de Soissons; and Louis was powerfully affected by the change which had taken place in the countenance of *Madame;* while, for the first time, the physicians themselves declared that the evil symptoms were rapidly increasing. La Vallière, who followed the king, describes the appearance of the dying princess as fearful. Her complexion was livid, her eyes burned with fever, her nose and lips had shrunk, and a cold dew covered her skin. Louis occupied a seat on one side of her bed, and *Monsieur* stood on the other, weeping bitterly; all the attendants were drowned in tears, but were so bewildered that although the agonized invalid continually entreated them to apply other remedies which might at least mitigate her sufferings, they remained terror-stricken and helpless. It was in vain that both the king and *Monsieur* appealed to the physicians, they remained equally supine; but at length declared, that the failure of the pulse and the coldness of the extremities announced the presence of gangrene, and that it was time to summon the viaticum.

While things were in this state the English ambassador was announced, and he had scarcely entered the death-chamber when the princess beckoned him to her side, and by great exertion conversed with him for a considerable time in English. This done, she declared herself ready to receive the viaticum; after which she took leave of her illustrious relatives, after recalling *Monsieur* to give him a last embrace.

The extreme unction was then administered; and during the ceremony M. de Condom[1] arrived, to whose eloquent and holy discourse she listened eagerly for a time, and then inquired if she might sleep. He was about, in consequence, to retire, when she motioned him to return, murmuring that she had deceived herself, for that the stupor under which she laboured was not drowsiness but death. M. de Condom once more knelt beside her in earnest prayer; the crucifix escaped from her relaxed fingers; her lips moved convulsively for an instant; and all was over.

Only nine hours previously Henrietta of England had been full of life, and loveliness, and hope; the idol of a court, and the centre of the most brilliant circle in Europe; and now, as the tearful priest arose from his knees, the costly curtains of embroidered velvet were drawn round a cold, pale, motionless, and livid corpse.

This death was, however, not only terrible in itself, but rendered tenfold more awful by the rumours to which it gave birth. *Monsieur*, whose neglect of the princess had been notorious, was an object of the darkest suspicion. It was remembered that the Chevalier de Lorraine, his especial favourite, had openly accused *Madame* as the instigator of his banishment; and dark hints were soon abroad, involving both the one and the other in the dreadful catastrophe which had just occurred.

When these rumours reached the king he could not conceal his consternation; and declared to Madame de Montespan that if he should ascertain that his brother

[1] Bossuet, afterwards Bishop of Meaux.

was implicated in so black a crime, his head should fall upon the scaffold.

On a *post-mortem* examination of the body the presence of poison was discovered, and that of so corrosive a character, that the whole of the stomach was in a state of inflammation, and even partially destroyed;[1] a fact which was no sooner ascertained, than the king summoned *Monsieur* to his presence, in order to compel him to acknowledge his share in the murder; and the extreme agitation which he evinced acted so painfully upon Louis, that in the height of his horror and suspicion he rushed upon his sword; when the captain of the guard, who was in the anteroom, entered hastily, and the king, lowering the point of his weapon, his breast still panting with the violence of his emotion, demanded of the prince a full and true confession of all that had occurred.

Monsieur, whose personal courage had never been contested, and whom the late scene had tended rather to restore to composure than to intimidate, clasped in his hand the insignia of the Holy Ghost which he wore about his neck, and took a formal oath that he was innocent, both directly and indirectly, of the death of his wife; upon which the king commanded him to withdraw; and retired to his cabinet to address a letter to the English court, in which he stated that *Madame* had fallen a victim to a bilious fever; while the same account was officially promulgated by the public papers; and the fact was attested by the certificates of five or six paid physicians.

Still painful misgivings haunted the mind of the king.

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Montespan.

He was unhappily too well aware that the princess had died from poison; and while he began to hope that *Monsieur* was innocent of any participation in the crime, he left no means untried to discover its actual authors. He soon ascertained that the succory-water, which was the constant beverage of *Madame*, was kept in the closet of one of the antechambers of her apartment, in a china jug, near which stood another vessel, full of pure water, in the event of the decoction proving too bitter. Nor did his discoveries terminate in so inconsequent a result as this; for it was further revealed to him, that on the very day when the princess died, a footman suddenly entering the anteroom in question, found the Marquis d'Effiat, another favourite of *Monsieur*, busied at this closet; and hastily approaching him, demanded what he was doing there.

To this unceremonious question the marquis had replied with the greatest tranquillity, that he was aware of his intrusion, but that being very much heated and extremely thirsty, and knowing that water was always kept there, he had been unable to resist his inclination to swallow a draught.

As the footman continued to grumble at the liberty which he had taken, M. d'Effiat, after repeating his apology, passed on to the saloon of the princess; where he remained for above an hour, conversing in his usual manner with the other courtiers.

The king was no sooner cognizant of this circumstance than he became convinced that Purnon, the comptroller of the princess's household, must have had some share in the catastrophe; and he accordingly determined to interrogate him. For this purpose he summoned M. de

Brissac, who was then on guard, and ordered him to select half a dozen of his men upon whose courage and discretion he could place reliance, and on the following morning to seize Purnon before he left his room, and bring him to the royal cabinet by a back staircase.

This order having been executed, Louis passed into the apartment, where the astonished and terror-stricken comptroller was awaiting his fate with much anxiety and considerable misgiving; and having dismissed M. de Brissac, and the valet by whom he was attended, in order to remain alone with the prisoner, the king advanced a few paces, and then with his eyes sternly fixed upon the pale countenance of Purnon, he summoned him to reveal every circumstance relating to the death of *Madame;* promising him a full pardon should his details be proved true; and warning him that his life would be the forfeit of the slightest equivocation.

The comptroller, with mingled joy and apprehension, pledged himself to tell all he knew; and that all was fortunately well calculated to allay the worst apprehensions of the king.

He stated that *Madame* had indeed fallen a victim to poison, sent from Rome for that purpose by the Chevalier de Lorraine, through the medium of a country gentleman named Morel,[1] who was, however, unconscious of the nature of his commission; and by whom it was delivered to the Marquis d'Effiat and the Count de Beuvron, who were induced to second the views of the chevalier, from the fact that his absence interfered greatly with their interests; and that they felt there was no hope of his return during the lifetime of *Madame.*

[1] Mémoires de la Princesse Palatine.

"But how," asked the king doubtingly; "do you account for the circumstance, that the other persons who drank of the same infusion with the princess experienced no inconvenience?"

"Simply, Sire;" was the reply; "because the Marquis d'Effiat had foreseen the possibility of such an occurrence; and had empoisoned, not the liquid, but the cup in which it was contained, by rubbing it on the inside."

The king passed his hand across his eyes; and then assuming a sterner look and a more threatening attitude, he demanded, in a voice which he in vain endeavoured to render firm and cold,

"And *Monsieur*—was he aware of this foul plot?"

"No, Sire;" was the ready answer: "*Monsieur* cannot keep a secret; and we did not venture to confide in him—he would have brought us to the scaffold."

The king drew a deep breath, as though he had heaved a heavy weight from his breast.

"Will you swear to this?" he asked after a pause.

"On my soul, Sire."[1]

Louis asked no more; and almost consoled for the death of the unfortunate princess by the conviction of his brother's innocence, he recalled M. de Brissac; and desired him to conduct M. Purnon to the gate of the palace, and then to set him at liberty.

It would seem as though the king believed that he owed some heavy compensation to *Monsieur* for the frightful suspicion which he had entertained against him; for it is certain that after a short interval the Chevalier de Lorraine was recalled to court; and moreover, as St. Simon asserts, laden with benefits; despite which

[1] Mémoires du Duc de St. Simon.

fact, he died so poor, that although his income had amounted to a hundred thousand crowns, his friends were compelled to bury him at their own expense.

His death, moreover, was worthy of his life. On the 7th of December, 1702, three years after that of *Madame*, as he was standing at the Palais Royal, talking to Madame de Maré, the governess of the Duke d'Orleans' children, and relating to her the particulars of a debauch in which he had been engaged on the previous night, he was suddenly struck by apoplexy, became speechless, and shortly afterwards expired.[1]

The court had forgotten the murder long before they were called upon to comment on the death of the murderer.

[1] Louis XIV, et son Siècle.

END OF VOL. II.

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